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THE
REVOLT OF TARTARUS.

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THE

REVOLT OF TARTARUS.

A POEM.

BY

CHARLES HEAVYSEGE.

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Book First.

Not man's offence primeval, neither man's
Salvation wrought, nor finally him saved,
Secure, beatified, upraised to heaven,
I sing; but beings who, once losing heaven,
Thereto no more return; ordained till doom,
Down deep in climes of fiery darkness dwell,
Subjects of horror, and the wards of chains;
Save when at certain intervals renewed,
To work his purposes inscrutable,
Doth sovereign pleasure unto them accord
To roam the earth, and empire of its air.
Of these, I mean to sing; of these unseen,
Inaudible, and unto sense unknown,
—Nevertheless authentic as pervading fire;—
Stupendous, powerful, wise, if wisdom were
Knowledge, not righteousness;—the Anakims
Of all created might; who with one glance
Could have o'erthrown the gods, and made them shrink
Into the nothing out of which they sprang:
Of these I sing—Jehovah's downcast sons;

His earliest, noblest putting forth of strength;
But who, offending him without excuse,
Forth from his presence and their bliss were driven;
To darkness driven, and dolorousness, and pain.

Say, thou historian of Perdition, say,
Why 'gainst her king did hell uplift her arm?
Or rather, why was hell left kingless? what
Had raised Abaddon to the golden skies?
'T was goading malice, unfulfilled revenge,
That, joined to constant and unhallowed pain,
Prompting continually to some foray wide
On God's broad realm; and still him instigates,
To pass the bounds of this allotted air,
And on some orb, by sin yet undefiled,
To enact the part permitted once on ours.
This, brooded long, infesting all his day,
And nights consuming in distracting thought;
At length, lone watching, as he sits, his soul
Girds on its armour with a fierce resolve;
And meaning to convoke his peers, he waits
In broken slumbers now the approach of morn.
Morn came ere long—hell's ominous rising morn—
Ere long it came, and numerous couriers,
Each on the wings of diligence, were sent
To all her magnates with a summons high,
That night them render at the imperial court.
Yet, think not, ye who love the structured pile,

Or in the present to behold the past,
To feast yourselves on pomps and pageantries—
Or ye, who, reading one immortal page,
Curious would look on this, and so compare—
Or, this forgetting, and the hand that wrote,
But seek to know how fare hell's works with time;
Think—see again the great seraphic lords,
Midst futile state, and idle glory, shrined
In high gold-reared *Pandemonium.*
—For Pandemonium long has disappeared;
Its costly heights, and phantom excellence,
Frittered by quakings, or dispersed by gales—
For in that land no edifice abides,
How strong soe'er by bands of potence tied,
Or thrown like fumes on the still atmosphere;
Nought stays; save rocks, and cells, and hollow winds,
Portions integral of the monster frame;
Which works to Mammon rest, his talent void;
Nor misery prompteth more to found, nor build.
Therefore, when Night (having first divided them,)
On either hand rolled back Day's burning wheels,
And placed them in the gulf, the fiery main,
That, circling hell, her daily drowns in flame;
Not 'neath high fane magnificently uplit,
Illuminated as from out a sky,—
But in a cavern huge, black, charged with shade;
Where light ne'er was, except by means of art,
Or emanation from its visitants,—

For there, even hell's loathed beam had never gat,
The unequal lamps now struggling it with gloom,—
High throned he sat. Great satraps are around,
Evoked from many a wild, from many a part
Severe, or dolorous, and wait his words:
As men on men await, so these on him;
These anxious wait, and bend on him their gaze,
Who bears around his own with lofty range,
A lip aggrieved, and half almighty pride:
Almighty half he seemed, though half destroyed;
Though bearing all the anger of the Son;
Though punishment him marred, and sin deformed;
Though ruined, not appearèd less, than first
Of heaven-born fallen, lesser than himself,
Smote from the skies, and fixèd in eclipse;
Condemned by fiat irreversible,
Midst pains extreme, and sad companionship,
To hold eternal, deepening twilight here.
Thus looked he, god of the evil gods;
With insolent, yet royal, star-like eyes:
Mount, on a mount appeared, pale as the moon;
With locks of faded gold, the empyrean's light
Duskèd from long-borne wo: a firmament,
Streaked and grey, his brow, from ancient scars;
With cavernous cheeks, and gaunt and withered form;
Yet seeming even as if the evening's glow
Might still be lingering on the crown of night,
Thus, now, in tones voluminous began:

"Ye summoned powers, this life grows tedious,—
Wretched, I will not name it to your ears;
Nor shall yon one who sits in the above,
Have joy of the confession; go I now,
Search through the infinite, to effect some change.
Too long have I allowed you, 'fulgent thrones,
To gloam your lustres in this lurid den;
Too long permitted malice to obscure;
Too long forgot the claims of leadership,
The regal service that to you I owe;
Tampered too long with the necessity
To lead you forth from this: I now depart,
Careless alike of danger or of toil;
Imbued with purpose from it to redeem.
Start not at this, nor deem it visionary:
For visions other than this land affords,
Or yonder orb and its surrounding film,
Yourselves prepare—prepare for leaving this;
For breathing constantly the balmy air,
Upon it spreading your pavilions,
Or on the firm establishing your thrones:
For to some hereto undiscovered isle,
Or where may Nature own an empty womb,
Will we repair; thereto hereafter lead
Our faithful powers; thereon ourselves conjure;
Plant round our borders loveliness and strength;
With light unborrowed radiate our sphere;
Our forms relume,—their native brilliancy

No longer injured by these dismal fires;
And, rousing all our latent sovereignties,
Make the dull crude, or vacant horror smile:
So, far from here, and pining not for heaven;
Forgetting earth, and its unworthy care,
Eternally, in pomp and peace, our hours
Shall glide: there we 'll forget — if gods forget —
Past tribulation; or, remembering it,
Convert it to a zest to years of joy;
Immortal honors and unsullied crowns;
Bliss, not to be destroyed, or afterwards
Wished 'whelmed for ever 'neath oblivion.
Nor think this purpose suddenly resolved:
This hath our soul in prospect had for long.
Since here we found a transitory sojourn,
'T was ours one day, nor distant that, to abscond;
To leave these flames, never for us designed —
Or if designed, vain yet the purpose shall,
For us who sprang to choose, not take our home;
Of strength of will unknown, to bliss ordained,
Though now mayhap enduring alien pangs;
Birth perhaps to nobler being than heretofore;
A being unvexèd of vicissitudes,
Wherein we may ourselves demonstrate kings,
And found a rival empire in the space.
For which the era now we judge has come,
From certain promptings in our inmost frame, —
Promptings long checked, but now grown absolute, —

Compel obedience to their high enjoin.
Behold! then, mighty Gods,—and not the less
Mighty because o'erthrown; divinities,
Essential sovereigns,—behold! this 't is
Hath caused our 'mand, 't is this we would effect,
And to that end forthwith ourselves betake,
To search from this the vast, the upward vast;
For, failing there, intend we take the 'neath,
Drop where strange horror shall receive our head,
And this be hung above. Provision made,
Hear now. Beelzebub, our constant aid,
And worthy fellow in the government,
Along with Moloch and with Belial,
We leave behind, and soon shall constitute,
A tri-borne crown, a triple regency;
Whom, joined with you in one illustrious arc,—
Beelzebub thereof being crown and prime,
With faith we trust to compensate our lack.
Be it yours obey; to stay supremest power
With 'vironing props, to be assiduous arms
Outstretching from the midst; to encourage hope,
Endurance, loyalty; ne'er closing eyes
Here keep on discontent, whilst I, acute,
Do search the boundless, unexplored abyss,
Prying for good—in one brief style, to be
Abroad the channels and the whips of law,
Whilst these at home employ their taxed care
Each for the common weal."

He said, and was
Forthwith about the three to inaugurate,
When thus a risen summoned interrupts:
"Be not offended, Potentate sublime—
So, by shewn talent and apparent might,
And reign whereof we know no origin,—
If I obtrude, since, as I judge, we are half
For counsel 'voked,—some apprehensive doubts,
Hint at contingencies. Methinks a drift
Like this, demands combined and careful thought,
And lengthened pondering, since on the result
Of individual's act, hangs myriads' fate;
Were it not so, I had declined to speak,
Where many sit superior, both in weight
Of wisdom and of dure: this must me excuse.
And first, thou speakst of change: if aught be got
By change, aught that be good, then let it come,
And grateful lips reward those who it bring.
But change may bring us ill; once sought for, did;
And so, achieved, may this; bad are we now,
But change can make us worse: nor yet this suffer,
Needs it here to exist: our enemy could change
A vale of bliss into a cell of wrath;
The widest empire to a den of wo;
Or, catching us on our migrating route,
Drive us with thunders to a lower vault;
Or might pursue us with outrageous fire,
Intolerable sulphur, and his frightful hail,

Through all the periods of eternity,
Into the grim inimical abyss;
Or stopping us by mountains far beneath,
Besiege us there, through everlasting years,
With all the fury of his magazines,
Each of us chained with linkèd thunderbolts.
Who would be valiant then? who then would dream
Of fair futurity?—yet he may this,
Yea and much more, perform, who has command
Of the whole armoury of heat and cold;
Who has possession of the elements,
And makes them do his bidding; and can lay
His potent influence on the conquered mind.
What worse can we conceive, than to be 'numbed
With terror? what more terrible imagine,
Than to be racked with his imposed remorse?
Yet can he more than this; for are we not
His puppets, who can play upon us still,
And still endow us with new hardihood
For greater pains? Much more he could perform,
If we thereto should tempt him; on us lay
Consolidated darkness, 'whelming tides,
From fiercer heat remand to fiercer cold,
Or stir intestine horror in our frames:
These are his attributes, howe'er derived,
Howe'er maintained, as yet unto our cost;
These his prerogatives, which he will use,
Nor slack with mercy his enhanced ire;

Doubtless he is our king, at least as yet;
The occult secret lies with him as yet
Of sovereign power; his power to us is fate;
Why then should we provoke its exercise,
Since reason tells us, and experience,
He will not use it (if indeed he can,
Or fear should prompt him for the ultimate,)
To annihilate; he will not serve himself
Of our extinction to extinguish strife?
Hope, thou wilt say, thee prompts; hope prompts the brave,
And ne'er deserts the being that 's divine.
Alas! hope not improvement from contumely,—
Nor think that he will lose us profitless;
Think not that, for we now no offerings bring,
No adoration he will let 's escape;
We shew his power, we are a warning ever
To those above, are his security
That their obedience shall never cease.
Then wherefore tempt we a catastrophe?
Why force him towards us more severe become,
To vindicate the greatness of his strength;
Politic not, to leave it cast in doubt
By lent forbearance towards us, enemies.
Deem me not weak, but might he not even now,
Who well we know acquaintance has of all,
By omnipresence, or his subtle spies,
Fierce with fresh insult to his monarchy,
Send delegated vengeance 'mongst us down,

The sudden scattering of our forms and thoughts ;
Or, even forestalling our departure hence,
And armed with terrors yet to us unknown,
Himself descend enragèd from on high,
And hale us hence to dungeon more debased ;
One hotter far, nor blessed with this cursed light,
Where we may ever grope, (our own beam quenched,
That here contiguous atoms shews by night,)
Or fly, or stumble witless into flames.
Beware, beware, great Prince ! to humble voice
Attend ; reflect upon this truth ; there may
Be other hells awaiting, lower poised ;
One hungry now, expectant us receive,
Whene'er our treason grows too great for this."
To whom the king, long since impatient, and
With loudened voice ; " Thou speakst as one unwise,
And worthless of the theme ! enfranchisement :
From height sublime foretime it was to fall,
From equal depths at present 't is to rise ;
Nor apprehension need we of our foe,
Solely departing his ! Say, thou who seemst
In durance pass thine everlasting years
Content, declare, why should he us molest,
Travelling the common void ? Go we to steal
An orb — purloin a work ? If all are his, —
Which much I doubt ; for why should nature yield
To one her sum ? — at most we but exchange :
And peradventure shall not need do that.

Who knows, the privilege may in us 'bide?
The apprehension that may him disturb:
Who may wish here confine, lest a more bright
Elsewhere, breeding content, for doubtless deems
He we are so debased, should tempt us set
About to beautify, and so perchance,—
His own experience, perhaps, from us educe,
(In instant, likely, that we dreamed it not,)
To his, an equal causive power. Cherub!
What thinkest thou, if we should place create?
He would not battle then? or, what if, this
Demolished, we caused the shades transport
It up the steep, elsewhere subserve our use?
Greater than that may we perform as yet—
Scarce less it will, to investigate the gulf,
The sombre regions of vacuity;
Peruse the sheets of light, so broad and oft,
That keep their steady stations 'midst the deep;—
Attain the empyrean,— which we intend,—
Review our native, catch our pillaged ray;
Nameless the struggle may await beneath.—
For who can tell the secrets of *our* deep,
Mysterious, awe-bound, yet unvisited?
Who, 'midst you deities and gods forlorn,
And from remissness of a slumbering will
Worse in your ignorance of things; for who
Can tell the secrets of our deep, whose wing
Hath never searched, nor ear revealings had:

Who shall describe the abyss of this abyss;
The adventures that shall there the stranger meet;
What horrors new, what blackness still more black,
May interpose; what dangers, these may scoff,
Ere breaks the gulf again to form and light;
What hazards then, who claims propriety,
Or friendly, or morose, or treacherous;
Furthers my voyage, or wrapping me in chains,
Delivers back to his antithesis!"

He said, and in his look great things seemed wrapped,
And awful secrets of the future deed,
Too great for less to know: when thus the chief:
"But how from us compulsion shall we throw,
That hereto proved too strong, the enforced return?"
To whom the throned; "That is an afterthought;
The greater done, the lesser troubles not;
Thee pacify, nor stand to conjure bodes."
To which, nevertheless, the chief: "But hath not once
His Son implied this ever our abode?"
To whom the king, now waxing wrath; "He hath not;
He sole hath said, These fires shall ever last;
For us they were prepared; but not that we
Should with them sempiterne — why mentionest thou
His Son? his son 't is thine to hate, not question thus;
His son it is hath caused the need of this;
But for his son thou now hadst been in bliss;
Nor I with sire had had to hold contest!
No longer be erect." The charged obeyed;

But in his stead rose one who thus began:
"How art thou fallen from thine height in heaven,
How peevish makes thee hell! What is the worth
Of all this costless vaunt, this empty tone,
Which fills but this black vault, not pranks the space?
Demolisher! canst thou unknit this frame,
This world of adamant, that we've no more
A prison? Create! say what canst thou create,
Canst not destroy, destroy thyself and us;
The first, thy dearest wish; the last, to us
Most precious boon. Were 't not for *thee*, we now
Had been in bliss — we thee forbid thy aim."
Surprise held dumb the king an interval;
Who then, with frown that made the scene grow dark,
And voice that sounded like the roar of heaven,
"'T is mine, not thine, forbid; nor these, nor hell's;
We do our pleasure bravedless, unrebuked!"
The braver quailed, but, spite his fear, resumed;
"Is 't not enough that thou shouldst here have led,
Or rather dragged us hither in thy route,
But thou shouldst tempt us to profounder home?
How low wouldst have us fall? what misery
Upon us heap — what loads of wo — what loads
Of chains? who constantly are more enlinked
By thine insatiate spite, that now thee prompts
To rivet lower in the bottomless?
I iterate, we thee this act forbid."
The monarch unto this retorted not,

But o'er his aspect came a horrid gloom.
Nor his alone; Beelzebub darkling sits,
As sky for thunder, and anon is heard:
Even Belial mutterèd; whilst Moloch's eyes
Upon the audacious one projected flames;
When thus the ruler's tongue, with force,—"Begone!"
And the cowed hierarch movèd from the scene,
Fallen to complete disgrace. Then to the three
Beckoning, who straight arose, and to his feet
Approached with reverence; incontinent,
'Mongst them he shared the regalia;
In Belial's hand reposing the broad seal,
In Moloch's placing the enormous sword,
But in Beelzebub's the sceptre putting,
And on his brow disposed a regal crown,
Token of primacy. Which done, all towards
Them bowed, with bended knee and forms nigh prone,
Doffing their crowns, that like to meteors shone,
Or crossing swords when battles rage. This passed,
He rose, and from his ebon throne descended,
Like burning cedar from Mount Lebanon's top;
Then grandly floated through the sombre pile.
The three pursued, and scarce appeared less dread.
As Sol goes fiery towards the distant sea,
And florid clouds him follow to the west,
So these towards the egress. The powers beheld,
And some waxed deadly pale; many advanced
To novel brilliancy; the rest unchanged.

Awhile they dumbly sat, and looked their amaze;
Then rose, enquiring, mingling. Great the noise,
And rare the spectacle. As might the stars
Glide from the zenith, sudden to the pole,
The scene, as down they strode from all around
And seemed approaching fires: gods, though suppressed:
With matchless port each came, and coming seemed
A faded Saturn, or a bolt-struck Jove.
Soon in a crowd they stand; assembled, seem
A glimmering mountain on an iron plain;
Their voices next are heard, and Etna seems
To roar. Various their mind: a doughty few
Applaud with open tongue; while many are
Perplexèd; the majority condemn.
Soon they dispersèd over Erebus,
Murky and resting dismal; the meanwhile,
Satan, in privacy, thus to the three
Yields up his last exhorts: "Be firm, yet mild;
Let no outbreak of passion blur your reign,
Nor discord 'midst you 'light,—for thee, Belial,
I leave to thine own vein, persuaded thou
Wilt not work folly. But, for thee, black brow,"—
To Moloch speaking,—"guard thee well thy fault;—
Too rash, mayhap, yet, turned thence the view,
Brave of the brave, nor equal one in zeal,—
Till I return." Then, with solemnity;
"For thee, Beelzebub, first in degree,
Though last whom I address; whom I have chosen,

As I myself once chosen, by ancient chance,
Or will of him whom now we no more honor,
And since, confirmed in this deep-poisèd realm
By the united suffrages of all—
As I myself once chosen, once confirmed;
So have *I* now chosen *thee* to be myself
In meditated absence: I rely
On thy tried wisdom, state capacity;
Not all unknown above, and ofttimes proved
Since journeyèd we here; thee do I leave
My still remaining self; my viceroy here,
My centered majesty: hell's fairest light;
Fountain of ordinance, and of policy—
Might and fertility in these thou hast;
Who, should they happen in their judgment split,
Must find in thee accordance. Farewell, my friends:
Farewell, thou regent king; vouchsafe awhile
To fill hell's throne, who would not heaven's disgrace.
Remember thou thy friend when he 's afar,
And keep his own as sacred as 't were thine:
Whate'er is his, he still with thee divides it,
Nor would he aught engross except his pain:
Thy care and honour thou with these wilt share,
Beloved friends and old companions;
Warlike, and subtle, who with them compare,
Though forced to flee before the thunderer!
And who too statists were on happier shores, —
On happier shores, and in our golden days —

Yet in ignoble ease did waste such days,
No powers required where reigned obsequiousness ;
But here find harder, so, more glorious rule,
To curb the sourèd spirits of the deep,
And o'er them sway. This task befits you well !
The fertile mind, and courage never shaken,
The wisdom match to each occasion, yours,
What now remaineth but to wish me speed !"—
Thus said, he left them, after warm adieu,
And archangelic pressure, and was soon
Riding in darkness (for his light was quenched,)
Over the infernal plains.

Book Second.

WHERE art thou, fount of song, oh Arethuse?
Where do thy waters flow, oh Helicon?
Where do the Muses haunt? In bosky grove,
Clear river, or brown dell; or do they live
On the bare mountain; or in ocean flood,
Or the etherial skies; that man hath drawn
Afflatus from the stars? Yet would not I
Their silvery influence call; but, far below,
Invoke the Stygian, and the empty vault
Make yield: for to the realm of endless night
Must I return; to Acheron black return;
To red Gehenna, Tophet, and the pit
Crueller than Hinnom's vale: the cheerful day
Must I resign for night, this sun-lit air,
For shade inflamed. Oh wheresoe'er ye are,
Ye dubious sisterhood, on me descend;
On me, who scarce would dare, without some aid
Divine, to use the measured pen; attempt
To make it yield sweet streams of Arcady,
Or like a hammer of great Vulcan's forge

Produce the verse. Hear from Parnassus, if
Ye there abide; or if round Castaly
Thoughtful ye sit, and hear my echoing voice:
Or, if ye circle the Pierian spring,
Your native waters, thence I you invoke,
To inspire my song. But ye are phantasies;
Ye hear me not, how loud soe'er I call;
Nor on Parnassus, nor round Castaly,
Thoughtful, nor by your native waters ye;
Less than the bubbles thereof unto me.
Answer, oh answer me, great Universe!
Where in the deep shall friendly power be found,
Here to sustain? But that I dare not call
Thine aid, Almighty One,—thy Spirit, which
Must still delight in truth,—I had thee named;
But awe o'ercomes me, and the fear to offend
Presumptuous; and so, mayhap, I wrong
Thy love immense.—Oh, if too narrowly
I 've measured its extent, forgive; forgive,
If I have straitenèd thy wide concern,
Thine infinite have with my finite dared
To grasp; and graciously vouchsafe to smile
On this.

Nine days had lapsed, nine days of hell,
When ran a rumour 'midst its cherubim,
Their monarch was abroad: and soon 't was added
He had arisen to earth; his purpose that,

Which, if it prosperèd, should them but bring
Access of task, and an enhance of pain.
Then came, that which had long been threatened ;
For as the thaw-wind, with presaging sound,
Foretelleth the departure of the frost,
So had the conduct of these miserables
Long omened change ; and long delayèd came
Indeed at last. All Tartarus now seemed moved,
And in her royal court, such as it was,
Crowded a multitude, who with loud cries
And rude persistency demand their king.
Moloch appearèd, then Beelzebub,
And Belial, and strove in vain them appease,
Who, rushing thence, convincèd of his absence,
Made towards a monstrous pit, which, soon o'erflowing,
From a truncated cone that rose therein
One thus, impetuously and loud, began :
"Now is the time to raise our state, or else
Lie ever cursed ! Our tyrant is gone forth ;
And know we too his errand — to invent
New toils, new routes for pain, fresh channels make
In the sublimity for wrath to dart
Upon us. Shall we this allow ? How long
Shall it endure ? Have ages not sufficed,
And these dread fires, yet to consume our patience ?
Or must another fearful cycle turn
Ere we shall lose our tameness ?" "No !" — was loud
Exclaimed, and replicated was around,

With universal deprecative gest'.—
"Slow to a fault ye are," continued he,
Them heeding not; "and from forbearance vile,
Outcasts from heaven, and will unworthy hell
If this ye longer suffer.—Whence shall come
Your hope, your doting fond belief, your vague
Idea of punishment's remission? that,
Of which ye talk, of which ye dream, have fire-
Disturbed visions; that, for which alone
Consent ye to endure? Shall it proceed
From war, from paltry, vile aggression, your
Poor puny blows dealt 'gainst the thunderer?
Or shall it come from peace, its search on us
Devolved, the ever-vanquished?" He paused,
And cried the multitude, "Peace, peace, we wish
For peace, if he will grant it us." "Why then
Do ye still provoke?" he stern retorts; "why still
Obey his stedfast enemy? Come forth
From one, and join (if 't may) the other's ranks:
Ye may be spurned, thrown back upon your fires,
Ye may be held in sovereignest contempt;
Re-doomed to howl with storm, to drink in gloom,
And welter in despair: yet that is but
Your earned desert, nor pride is compromised
By chastisement from God. Say then, that ye
At length have learned, that if no peace with heaven,
There is no ease in hell; say then, that ye
Repent, ye have idly done, and wrong; say, that

Ye will reform, yourselves respect, become
Selfishly virtuous. — Who fain would climb,
Must scan not nice his steps; who here would well
Endure, punctilio discard; who would
For liberty, not will alone, but act.
Choose, then, your part, to suffer cravenly,
Or your own will's equality assert."
Again he paused, and many a scattered shout
Attested the effect, and multiplied,
Till the whole army rose in one wreathed front,
And heaved the ambient with their instant voice.
He grimly smiled, and thus well-pleased pursued;
" Bravely ye shew, and prove, though much debased,
Suffering hath not extinguished spirit quite
Even as the hot spires wave in this abode,
Or the fair woods in that from whence exiled,
So now was your array. How glorious
Appeareth might, when 't is for right displayed;
The voice of justice is a lofty note,
And honour brings: gone forth is your acclaim
To the wild ends of wo, and shall redound,
In companies, and crowds, who here shall come
Behold those who the deed have wrought. Henceforth
Pain is not chosen: hell from this hour is free;
See that no more ye deign accept a thrall."
He ended, amidst cheers, and in his place
Soon stood another, who straight, with scarce less force,
Abrupt began: " Co-sufferers, and co-slaves,

Who here so mean, would be perpetual tool
For other's purposes ? who his own being
Through baseness drag, that others might soar to honour ?
Are any here so vile ? Does hell contain
Angel so lost ? Oh cherubs, ye, who heaven
Forfeited because of jealousy of rule,
Display your virtue now ! An aggregate
Of motives you incites —self-love alone
Not urges, but just pride. Thus to persist,
Despite of our affliction, 'spite our prayers,
Who longer can respect him ? odious
If scanned, who caused our fall, yet lower fall
Thus fallen within ourselves ; what breast not burns
At his o'erbearingness ! and shall this be ?
Shall we, who once disdained a rightful rule,
Longer acknowledge his ? Shall right derived
Glory o'er right divine ? Though great he seem,
Shall he not shattered be, against us smitten ?—
Say, ye who, dim, and shorn of half your beams,
Mourn them continually, shall we, who once
In dazzling brightness trod the land of shine,
Remain eclipsed beyond our 'portioned horror
For a subordinate ? Shall we, ye braves,
Who fought three fields in heaven, nor one had lost,
But that the o'erwhelming monarch sent his Son
With stemless rout upon us,—say, shall we
Continue our dear-bought liberty, yield up
To one formed like ourselves ? Shall he still reign ?

No, although fate should lead him kingly back,
Over our necks he shall not mount his throne;
We from us shake his olden tyranny;
His ancient wrong shall ne'er be modern right;
The time has come,—the glorious modern day,—
More glorious,—as spirit transcends the gross,
Choice destiny,—than when we first beheld
Astonished the light, ourselves to assert.
If ye be worthy freedom, shew it now;
If ye be one in purpose, one in kind,
By union inviolable be it proved."

He ended passionate; and, to passion moved
His auditory, that, far stretched, and still
Came like the snow-flakes drifting, or around
Poured like torrents down the dismal sides
Precipitous of that black dell; or else,
Like sandbanks pale beneath the wintry moon,
Extended ghastly, and, wove with their heads
Immeasurable maze: hoarse rumbled they,
And long; and seemed engulfèd Titans, who
Tumultuous, raged against Idean Jove:
This now remits, and slowly advanced one
Of taller form, his eye less passion lit;
His face maturer, and more marked by pain;
Who calm, yet scarce with look of dignity,
Him followed thus: "Spirits, immortals, flames,
If still with ardour burn ye; passions, souls;
Hear, and in hearing mark me; tell me why

In these outrageous numbers are we found,
In place that wo and bending usance sole
Could reconcile us to? Wherefore is this
Capacious hollow spread with forms as rank
As are its outcast cinders, or less cursed
Acclives, with frail and stunted herbage? need
I ask! all hearts throb answer, Tyrant wrong
It is hath caused it; wrong that with time,
And force that still increases, hath achieved
What naught less could effect.
Have we not borne in faithfulness our pain,
(Pain which now racketh some,) without one act,
One word, scarce look of merited upbraiding?
Have we not done his work, made acts his will;
Covered one orb with wo, the which of right
Usurpeth only this; and hither brought
Captive by myriads the inferior souls
The thing called Death 's dislodged; each task achieved,
But with an added pain; and are these feats
Only to call for fresh? What thinks our liege?
What mean his lieutenants? Are we the rocks,
Are we the blackened rocks on which each night
We lay our wretchedness? Are we the fires
Themselves, in which, to humour their caprice,
Our foolish leal makes us so often rush?
We tell them nay; we sentient are; we are
Obnoxious unto pain; our essences
As pure as those which they may boast; nor had

We fallen to that pass, but that blind love,
And following his fate, hath made this our
Abode." He paused; then, as if musing, thus
Resumèd speech: "Oh, thoughtless, selfish sense!
Oh, huge ingratitude! vast as himself;
That, not content with most, had fain grasped all:
Cursed ambition! that, promising to raise,
Hath hurled us to these depths. We 're miserable,
How oft hath it been said, yet not half told;
To speak its sum would take for evermore;
It is a story would require all time;
Nor then achieved; for as eternity
Itself unrolled, so our woe's catalogue."
And groaning low, he stood with vacant eye
Fixed on the crowd beneath, wrought to complete
Despair.

This scene prolonged, high in the press
A youthful angel in a frenzy rose,
And with far-sounding voice shrieked out these words:
"Since this is meant our everlasting home,
Let us, from abolition of all hope,
Take impulse from despair. Arise, arise!
What is this petty tyranny we debate,
Compared to that above! Let us return
T' our rightful seat; well now we know the road,
And armed with these, there with us carried fires
Burst in, nor allow ourselves retreat; who cares
For wounds, and grovelling ignominy, endured

To 'scape this den! Let him deluge with fire,—
Fire is our wont; roar and transfix with bolts,
'T is there that we would cling; still would we grasp
Tenaciously the soil, nor once let go our hold,
But, if dislodged, heaven carry with us here.
Who seconds me in this? where are the fearless ones?"
And scarce he 'd ceased, when up another gat,
Who with clenched fists, that whirlèd he aloft,
And upturned look seeming defy the skies,
Forth belched wrath. Even as a cloud might rain
Down brimstone and huge drops of fire, was this:
Loudly he raged 'gainst God, and made huge scoff,
At what he termed their light antagonism,
Counseling against him a more strenuous ire:
And even whilst this spake, a third arose,
And o'eragainst grinned horridly on both:
Both horridly and foul he grinned,—a store
Of hideous fire within his eyes,—and clapped
His wings, and yelled across, and, brutish-faced,
Seemèd already gloating o'er success.
Another, and another rose, and soon
Whole bands; soon were the audience entire
In one commotion, like a storm-lashed sea.
Dreadful the noise, 'midst which the leader's cries
Were drowned. O'er all arose loud party shouts:
Now heaven's name ringeth high; now that of hell
Resounds with heavier peal; nor earth's unheard.
Rage governèd, and mad Despair: in one

Wide charge, three desperate efforts forth to rush
The heaven aspirants made ; as oft repulsed.—
For never can forget the major part
The burning anger of a former day ;
The dread descent, the speed compulsory,
When down the roaring vaultway of the skies,
Army on army, host still urging host,
With mingled havoc and infernal pain,
Thunders them chased. Nevertheless, for long
Prevailed the strife : which by degrees subsided,
Outdying like the storm, whose savage bursts
Unwillingly are hushed ; that now peace reigns,
Or its similitude ; though in his chains
With growls suppressèd lies the whelp of war.
Now, perhaps had this a fatal damage done,
But for the succour of an ancient fiend ;
An ancient fiend, and of the earliest formed ;
Mayhap, first formed of those not formed for thrones :
In heaven, aye deemed an antiquity :
He, on the pyramid had stood from first
Not thinking interfere, but to observe
And give his countenance ; no perilless deed.
But some slight good is even in the lost ;
And heaven rekindles in the depths of hell :
Within his breast now holy pity wrought,
And sympathy for less inured ones.
The garb of Vice is never fair, if scanned ;
Nor well can Virtue dwell in ugly house :

The wearer shapes the robe : the dweller graces
The roof : and this poor fiend his form.
A sage he seemed, or minister of good,
That none had deemed he e'er had moved in crime.
His hair showed white as wool, his eye benign,
His features calm, pale, spiritual, mild ;
And wore he garment of more obvious light
Than the majority. He now advanced to speak :
When as piled clouds rolled by the northern blast,
At some soft veering from the tender south,
Unserrying, reveal sweet fields of blue,
The vanquishèd relaxed their sullen mien ;
Their ears they ope ; and 'midst a silence deep,
And close attention, thus the Ancient spake.
" Afflicted mates, my junior brethren ;
What shall my language be ; what will ye hear ?
No chidings in me are, my friends : alas !
Much cause ye have for that which we have seen ;
For desperate act. Who would not hence escape,
He able ! — but perdurable being should
Be wise, and those of many æons not
Encourage folly. — Thus to rise, *en masse*,
What were it but to be rehurlèd down ?
Not worse than that is now, — sparing the pain, —
And we may yet arise, — given this offence
Perhaps never, — 't is true but slowly, and
By thin degrees, to that bright stage whence dropped.
At first, some slackening may betake these fires ;

Or our own natures thereto more incline ;
Until removed to some cooler clime,
We leave this ceaseless conflagrative den,
Perchance for its exterior, where our
Emolished frames may profit by the warmth
That permeates its thick circumference.
Then, some low orb may be allotted us,
Crude, and not yet of soul preoccupied ;
Where we may pass probation, and be tried
If worthy of a higher ; and, that gained,
A higher may ensue, and more adorned ;
Still more adorned the next ; the next, still more,
Whilst grows the light : and thus may we attain,
By many steps, our former altitude.
A journey long, 't is true, but preferable sure
To this perpetual halt ; and lightened too by hope :
For who could bear a being hopeless quite,
To have its visitings utterly denied !
Better to be (from us withheld) no more
Extant : yea would, although we lived unpained.
Oh, if ye would not quite abolish hope,
Prefer despair to mere despondency ;
Talk not again of war." He said no more,
But as a star that, rising o'er the pole,
Wheels its slight circle o'er the arctic heaven,
Then disappears, so he : when straight another,
Who thus began : " Ye spirits of the deep ! —
For since in eminence no more we dwell,

That style us best befits,—resume your hearts.
To bear a temper equal to our fate
Is highest deed: unmoved by joy, unfixed
By fear, the part of gods: serene, serene,
Repose the mightiest souls, and brood in calm:
Peace at the innermost abides, although
Around be strife; thence, circumscribes life's rage:
But ye are by your passions governèd;
Not them by you.—Pshaw, pshaw! I blush through all
This foul deformity, for you, my mates,—
To dare again the arm that thrust us down,
Or worse, sit drowned in tears deploring. Tush!
Shall we who 've borne so terrible a past,
Quail at the future's name? Shall we, the sane,
Be ruled by phrenetics? Shall youth assume,
And be allowed, the leadership of years?
Shall we succumb to our deep wretchedness,
Or do immortal battle with despair?
The frown of evil overshadows us,
And fell disaster grinneth from heaven's walls:
'Midst pain we pass our sad existences,
Darkness, and sorrow, and the clank of chains;
And in our ear no more the sudden trump,
That tells in heaven the opening of her morn,
Grandly resoundeth; nor the morn herself,
Mingling vermillion and the beams of gold,
Delights our eye: but the tremendous, harsh,
And grating words of doom, that here consigned

As still remembrance rolls them o'er the soul,
And the reports of fire, and sounds of pain,
Our music now.—From morn till evening,
From noon till night, penance alone is ours;
Our dawn, the glare of these awakening fires;
Our morn, the time of flight and havoc wild;
Our noon, the rampant tyranny of flames;
The day's decline, the long-sustained heat,
Inveterate fervour; and the tardy eve,
Rank with its sulphurous and afflictive steams;
The door to night's sad dungeon, thick with glooms
Yet not for these, nor more that in the mind
Ever abides, inimical to peace,—
Remorse, or disappointment, endless care,
Or the foul stings of rage, will I recant;
Or from the fulness of this public shew
One jot abate. Who says that hope is not?
Who shall assert our's everlasting wo?
Who, though he heard the fearful dicta's sound,
Shall say Jehovah will uphold his word?
Did he not say to man, "The day wherein
Thou eatest of the tree, that day thou diest"?
Did man then die? Was he resolved to nought?
Or did he only sicken for awhile,
To be reinstated in unfailing health?
Nay more, to crown what must be wonder still,
Did not the awful Lawgiver himself,
Foreseeing, and determining perhaps the whole,

From out his fulness of invention find
Such means, means that appeared to his own hurt,
As have restored this erring creature, man;
Upon conditions easy, (and their reign
So brief, all disproportion seemeth mixed
'Twixt his probation's length, and his reward's,
Betwixt his time, and his eternity,)
Into his favour, into our lost heaven;
Therein prepared, and portioned him a place,
Higher than first he had intended him;
A place secure, which is its highest worth;
Beyond even fate, or our malevolence.
So he towards us may act; so he from us
May turn away the ill, or by our pain
Be appeased. This, when I meditate the theme,
Was, is, and shall its aspect; for to fright
My soul with chimeras and contingencies,
Shall ne'er be mine, whilst I have pains that are
So actual." He said, and straight 'midst low
Applause withdrew, his steps being crossed by one,
Anxious to seize the time and bring resolve.
Much promisèd indeed the looks of this:
Courage was on his brow, and resolute his lip;
And all his frame shewed energy and heart:
And to the brink advanced, he thus began:
"Comrades in bale, enduring amities,
Now that you are yourselves, I fain would speak.
Hear me for fairness; and for policy:

Nor let your hearts disturbèd be, because
Of that which should yield only confidence.
Twice are those fixèd who misgivings had,
And who, once shaken with contrarieties,
Now in conviction stand: so we, more firm,—
More firm from that which threatened to uproot.
The original theme, maintained by wisdom first,
By courage afterwards, is ours indeed:
Peace shall our watchword be, not enmity;
No greater enemies have we than those
Who would incite to battle—friends are foes,
Counselling unwisely—the route to heaven might prove
The passage to worse hell; for evil grows
Of evil, and no bounds is set unto it.
This warning, then, admitted, and with your lent ears,
We now resume the theme. Our tyrant is
Gone forth, surmise we whereunto, and more
Than guess his errand—not to spend his hour,
To take his solace in the cool abyss;
He has steered to earth, (there lies his wish!) to wreak
Further his spite 'gainst his too powerful foe.
Be he repulsèd, moody he 'll return,
Making this land more black: if he succeed,
Labour increasèd, aggravated pains—
Labour, delightful, voluntarily underta'en,
But odious when compulsory, and for pain,
Who loveth it, who courteth agony?
Who, so inveterate here, so spirit-galled,

So writhing for a gasp of sweet revenge,
Would indefatigably strive;—he free,—
To make the terrors of this place more sore?
Behold, when first driven here, in fainting hosts,
(Though from its strangeness strongly all appeared,
And horror oft us chained,) how mild it was
Comparèd with its present furiousness!
Its days how brief; its seasons how commixed;
How lithely each into each other drawn;
But now! abrupt, or one stern penal length,
Devouring us, inexorable, yet unconsumed!—
Then slowly from the mountains heaved at morn
The gloom, and on the valleys slowly oped
The leaden doors: then laggingly advanced
The fires upon our dormancy, nor half
So burning eyed; and tardily the flames
Crept up these walls, as if reluctantly;
And noon raced o'er his arch, as though
Considerate of uninuredness; and long
The night reposed.—Now mark the clime! see how
The morning comes, advancing, fiery-paced;
With sound of burning hoofs, and cracklings dire
Of the Asbestine: or drinking up the ground
With horrid strides, swallows a land at once
With hideous roar, and us in deluge (drowned
Our sentries' voice) bearing upon its front,
Helpless, though mad with pain: fire is o'er all!
The mountains glare, the valleys reek with flame.

Time was, no sentry stood; now, stands in vain;
For who knows now, at choice of camp at eve,
Where on the morrow shall our scourge first rage.
At noon, the altered conflagration dwells,
Grinning on slaves; and oh, how long till eve,
Which seems as 't ne'er would come; and night 's too short
For dreams. And this is your achieve! Observe,
These firmament-stored fires, those grim reserves
Of untried torture, heart-subduing pain;
Restrainèd once, dared by offence, begin
With noise significant and warning sign
Of rolling smoke, and belchèd purple flame,
To rumble through their elevate domain.
Note how the nether boils, the fatal womb
Of this fell kingdom, at our advent found
Nigh pent in sullenness, now mad to heave
Us nightly on our beds, prognostic, perhaps,
In some dim night to engulf. And this is your
Achieve! Behold the storms, that formerly
Did their own regions keep, invade us here,
And aggravate the flames—the flames not all,
But now capricious whirlwinds us assail,
Dashing us 'neath deep waters, or on firm
Multangular mountains, or deep bury us
In distant snows; or, lost in Stygian vales,
Leave us forlorn to wander, and therein
Midst seven-fold darkness brood the years away.
And this is your achieve, your labour's end!

Let Earth now feebler speak: contemplate, ye
Who voyage, the ignominy, when chased by those
We knew for friends in light: reflect the sting,
When in sincerest decency besought,
They turn away in horror, and refuse
Commerce with us in aught. But why recount?
The pains of hell, and the contumely
Of heaven, are known alike to all—heaven lost
Is long, and its society; nor earth
Is yet our own, nor the wild fields of air,
Barren and void: hell can herself supply
Why she of it should change the masterdom:
Our argument lies here; here, in the midst
Of horror, though at noon; here, caged by flames,
Chafed to their pitch by crimes to ordinance
Performed:—not upon earth, 'midst chant of birds,
Nor in the tide of air, where seraphs sing;
But here, 'midst retributive groans, 'midst sighs
Even heaven might melt—not in remembrances,
But in the actual,—this scourging hour
When hell puts forth her fierceness, and your kind
Wide pant beneath it; here, where all your force,
That shook in battle once the burnished sky,
Cannot sustain you calm through one dark day;
Here, in the core of night: here, where condemned
To death eternal, never ending life,
Sure of your grisly immortality,
Ye choose to pass the fell secured career,

'Midst growing penance, respite still curtailed,
And the red future's frightful countenance."
The throng moved like a grove, and he pursued:
"Ay writhe, ye myriads, maze, be within
Perplexed, for ye have need;—who but yourselves
Would have endured so long! now thunder forth,
Forbearance knows an end." As the report
Tremendous of a mine that's sprung, or as
The startling peal that heraldeth the storm
From out the black and silence-covered skies,
The shout arose. Ten, louder, followed it;
That hell within her distance seemed o'erthrown.
"These were the knells of wrong," continued he,
"Dooms to the ears of many; shout again!"
And those who sat, met those who hovered,
And with joined hands, and with devoted looks,
Made hell to tremble with increased acclaims;
Which having ceased, he raised his hands, and said:
"Oh, thou big present moment of our lives,
Fated to honour through eternity,
Stay, and or e'er thou minglest with the years,
Record our vows. No more shall Satan rule
Within this pit; no more for him we 'll offend:
Who sins, shall suffer; not all for one be plagued;
Though we have seen elsewhere one scourged for all,
Henceforward leave we unmolested heaven."
Then changed;—"Hear now, how best turn words to acts
Let the sole breach that egress gives from hence

Be closely watched; whilst fresh reliefs supply
The place of those recalled by sovereign press.
Let none depart, save nobles, if they wish;
But every comer new acquainted be
With our exchanged estate. When all are here,
Be held a solemn court, at which we may
Our future polity settle." He said, and well
The proposition took the general ear,
That they with full consent the motion vote,
Nor stint applause; 'midst which advanced one,
One shrewd and circumspect; a business-like
And practical intelligence. Lofty aims
And genius flights he knew not, but the ends
Of others well he could successful make:
Tact, and an adaptation, were his forte:
As fingers to the brain, so he to higher spirits,
Useful, but yet subordinate; and he thus
Began: "Councillors, ye seem agreed, as well
Ye may, such cogent reasons given you, and
So well driven home; now therefore to avoid
Of anarchy and wrong, in interim must
Ensue 'twixt this, and the decreëd council;
Let us ere parting make a choice of one;
One provèd wise beforetime, staid, and firm,
Nor to alarm obnoxious—yet discreet
And wary; one the whom all may respect,
Acknowledged honourable, ungiven to aspire—
Yet able, nor unmindful of applause,

And whom, a transient period lifted high,
May, like earth's workmen's life-protecting domes,
Shield from the ill-disposed amongst ourselves."
This, with a kindred favour they receive,
And soon elect a brief plebeian king;
And whose first exercise of sovereignty,
Was to decree the morrow set apart
To celebrate the new-born liberty:
Then rising, with a shout that swept half hell,
All rose, and, travelling each their several ways,
Bore the result to her less saddened bounds.

Book Third.

Hail, holy Morn! hail, undefiled; on earth
The universal virgin as thou fliest,
The over-ardent sun, as Daphne once
From the pursuing bright Apollo ran.
Thee do I hail, still in the land of hope;
Of mottled dawning, and with promise filled
Of golden noon.—Thee do I hail from far,
As, far beneath the piercing of thy sun,
I sojourn in the region of the night,
Where everlasting going-down hath been,
And no orb lumes. Oh, thou benignant day,
Who shall thy value speak, that doth not speak
With tongue informèd by thine utter loss?
Who shall declare God's second attribute?
Who, from his borders take the mystic beam,
And bring with more than famed Promethean power
It down to hell? What fond, fallacious hope
Shall bring *there* day?—Dayspring, that all revives,
Blest hour! pale harbinger of brighter things,
Say, from thy station in the waking sky,

What sends thee forth? Thou on the hills hast sat,
And on the vales hast come rejoicing, and
Along the deeps and towering mountains skipped,
In rounds unceasing, from antiquity
Beyond our measuring; yet, art to us strange:
Whence art thou, Light, and what thine origin?
Or, unoriginated, hast thou wrapped
From out eternity the invisible;
Unseen through thee his habitation bright,
That dazzles angels? Say, are these thy years;
Or art thou but the opening of his eyes,
Who, omnipresent, likewise fills the shade?
I, from a shade below the vale of death,
Do meditate on thee; soul of the world,
And radiant child of heaven;—eternal child—
Hoary, ineffable stream, that out hast flowed
From everlasting. Thee, the Omnipotent took,
And cast thee round about him, when the years
Were not; immeasurably sat with thee,
Ere fiery seraph or the first archangel were;
Ere them, did thee ordain his sovereign throne.
Thou wert, when love was yet unseen, was yet
Unmanifested in his wondrous works;
Rejoiced, and him environed, who absorbed
All noon, eternal noon, no morn, no eve.
Thou, upon earth didst earliest come, at voice
Of him; there, whilst his spirit moved the deep
Upon, creative, solitary; thee.

The whom pronouncing good, he callèd day.
If thou be good, thy lack is evil then;
And happy is the eye that drinks thy beam.
The morn broke mild, for milder seemed the flame,
And every denizen felt movings at the core;
And strove forget awhile his horror old,
And perdurable pain, in the forthcoming fête.
Great was the stir o'er all the territory:
For as when earth intends some festival,
The uplands swarm, and every farmstead yields
So now, from all the woful coasts proceed
The inconceivable multitude of the accursed,
Towards the infernal nave; where now arose
An obelisk tall, upreared in the past night;
And, like that temple of the wisest king,
No sound of tool or workmen heard thereon,
Round which at noon the rejoicings owed commence.
But who shall tell the numbers of that day?—
As towards some dreadful vortex of the sea,
Might float her stores of circumfused wreck;
Or, as the earth with confluential gale
Should towards the equator muster all her clouds;
So they, as 'fore some steady impulse driven
For all that morn: millions of cherubim
And seraphim, and orders names unknown,
And with their pinions drowned the roaring flames.
Signal the scene of that great gathering!
Not one of all hell's tribe was absent found.

As when some tyrant, meaning to invade
His rival's kingdom, spares no warrior;
Or as the birds of passage on a day
Should all assemble, take their wintry flight,
So it complete; and desolate left wide hell,
Who wondering, alarmèd, thrice secured
Her bars, and girt with triple adamant
Her concave strong, prevent escape; fond fear!
Till noon they came, when, swellèd infinitely,
Thick as the stubble on the field they stand,
And with enormous range; or as the waves,
Dancing innumerous to the minstrel wind,
That sweeps the surface of the murmuring sea;
Or some lagoon, low-banked and dismal, foul,
The drain of fens. Till noon their numbers grew;
When, as the flames, the gnomons of their clime,
Above o'erlapped their fierce encountering waves,
And down the centre made a horrid surge,
Stepped forth tall herald, with a clarion loud,
And blew a sprightly and exciting strain,
To loose them to their sports. Immense the tube,
And filled hell's utmost caverns with its note;
Not less obstreperous, perhaps, than that which shall,
Blown by the Archangel, cause t' awake the dead.
The low roof it prolonged in dull reply.
Forthwith the concourse heaved, and presently,
Enormous flights of angels filled the air,—
Squadrons immense,—and defluent bore away.

The centre thus ; and the circumference,
Not less in aspect than the sons of heaven,
Though blasted all, and scarred by Stygian fires ;
With bristling front and horrible array,
On rhombs diverse, advance to minstrel sounds.
Like moving woods they come, and march like gods,
As with alternate limb they stately tread
Consentive, and with multitude immense
Cause shake the ground.

So dissipates the huge.
And now with all the hollow mirth of fiends,
And vigour left them by the Omnipotent,
Hell far-resounding on her centre shook :
Some plied the race on untamed lightning steeds,
Or from high crater's top, magnificent
Of smoke, came downwards avalanching ; some
On chariots, some upon the winds disport,
Some bid the whirlwinds sweep them through the flames :
Tremendous rout ! — Even as the electric fluid,
Scorning the clouds, and omnipresent-footed
Mocking the plain ; the former, impetuous,
And silent glancing o'er the scarèd scene ;
The latter, gradually towards the burning roof,
In dismally roaring and wide spirals, borne.
Some threw the quoits, — for the occasion formed, —
Of round immense, dread whizzing through the air
Their twanging adamant, yet easily hurled ;

Or wrestled some, and strained the spiritual frame.
Some leaped, — their league, — in emulation, sprang
At one sheer bound across the frightful gorge:
Some flew, in legions scoured the plain, like strings
Of wanton hounds, or flights of fairer doves:
Others, — whilst crowds from cloud and ground observed, —
In grim array and mock belliquiousness,
Charging, enacting all the game of war,
And feigning the uptearing of the hills,
Rehearsed the three heaven-foughten fatal fields.
But all, though strong, preferred not the robust:
In contemplation thousands dwelt, and seemed
To enjoy a Sabbath from their misery:
More intellectual, in converse others
Beguiled the hours, and half beguiled themselves
With themes momentous, and chivalric —
Celestial chivalry exercised on earth,
In rescuing mortals from infernal wiles,
With prowess greater than the warlike arm —
The scaring front of virtue: some, on wings
Of memory, excursions took, and sketched
From out the past full many a blissful tide,
And noble era, with the golden tongue;
Or with enacted face of stirring things,
Enhanced the time. — Moreo'er, buffoons there were,
And socials mere, as upon earth there are;
And punishment, a few, had rendered weak
Of mind: than these, more melancholy sighed, —

More numerous far,—and wandered up and down,
Their hands within the ethereal of their breasts,
No hope of future restoration seen,
To them sole boon: some talked their recent act,
And its results towards hell and earth discussed;
Whilst a vast mass betook to food and wine,
Hell's first repast, and maiden vintage pressed,
And list to dulcet strains,—to dulcet strains
They sitting list—to sweet, yet awful strains,
Drawn from the lyres of dimly fingering ghosts,
And pipes were spectral-lipped, and flagons drained;
Until, each faculty alike being flown,
Of sense and intellect, they rose, threw high
Their waggish heels, and anticked at the dance.
But a superior sort, and these not few,
Gave music loftier task, both voice and harp;
Made melody divine, though tinctured high
With grief; sang of the Godhead, sang of heaven,
Of earth, and chaos, and of gloomy hell;
Their once exploits in heaven's disastrous war,
Their present feat, and future destiny.
Song overruled their fate, and Harmony
Appeased the furious hours; even Memory
Laid by her stings, and Conscience; and Remorse
Expired, or slumbered;—Melancholy sole,
Dreaming of Better Days, yet Atheist
Them towards. Of evil next they sang; and good,
Its opposite; joy, sorrow, and ambition;—

Or in the mind, or from the outward born ;
Innate, or circumstantially possessed ;
Tempestuous denizens ! Of justice too,
And holiness ; of vengeance, latent love ;
Choice, and necessity, and mercy fair ;
The love of being, and the dread of death.
Ten thousand round them stood, and hearkening wept ;
And hell, remorseful, listened, sorrowing
Her chains so fast should bind whom so could sing,
Could with their voices half her change to heaven.

So ran the tide of her first carnival ;
Her first, and last ; and for a moment felt
Her sons a real (if not unmingled) joy—
First gladness felt in their deep house of wo,
Dreaming reform ! Vain dream, who lack God's grace !

Meantime, Belial with an alert eye,
Remarks the turn for sport, and from a mount,
Himself invisible, surveys the fête below ;
And fixed to mingle, for awhile revolves
Or if to do so in his proper shape,
Or in inferior guise ; and chose at length
The last. Down then he floats, and soon, alight,
Himself insinuates into many a group ;
Remarks their mood, and listens their convérse,
'Spersed with on him the oft-directed jest ;
Nor failed to sow in each words of advice,

The which, if followed, might eventually
Their polity contravene. Such then he left,
And from a sable wood emerging next,
Like the full moon from out black bank of clouds,
In native guise approached the bibbant crew.
" Gods," there he said, " for such indeed ye are,
Lacking this expressed juice, how much more with!
Quaff to your fill, and find, if 't may, for wo
A new conduit. — Knit not on me your brows;
Arrive I not to hinder mirthfulness,
But to partake on equal terms your cheer:
Why should we not, though cast so low, repeat
Our wont on high?" And with the words sat down,
Self-bidden, at the board. Scowls were the sole
Reply: then, glances of distrust; and next
Ensued whisperings from ear-visiting lips,
With fixed regards of stern suspicion from
The sterner sort, and long, heart-searching looks;
An ordeal, which unwincingly he bore,
Until, persisting in the shew sincere,
Guile grew like truth, and their impairèd eyes
Lost half their jealousy: wine did the rest:
The imposed-on sense allowed on them impose:
Their hearts expand, their eyes relume with fire,
Till the bright beams thereof encounter his
In a meretricious blaze. Awhile they swim
In mirth and high carouse, and many a wild
Guffaw rings o'er the monstrous board, and oft

The welkin reels, as, starting to their feet,
With loud acclaim and long voluminous roar,
They pledge the free. Awhile this lasts; when they
Arise to mingle with the game, and he,
Dissembling chief, to reincognito the scene.
So Belial—in hell, or earth, the prince
Of profligates: for his coadjutors,
Bëelzebub dwelt solitarily,
Save with a few plebeians that faithful stood
Of the dark regal house—the potentates,
The realm's magnificoes, great hierarchs,
Princes, and powers, and barons of the dread—
Deep-fallen ones, whose mighty spirits bowed
Before their pains; themselves half malcontent,
Though hurled from state, saw not unpleased the change;
They, in their several parts, mere lookers on;
Or powerless gathered round that stately chief.
Not Moloch so: he, formed alone for act,
Winged with red fury and a black revenge,
To seek their Lord was climbing towards the stars.
Not oft he seeks the light, but frequenter
Round Erebus in darkness stalks his path;
The gloom of hell, and his paroxysms fierce
Of pain, to meet with fiercer blasphemies,
His life preferred: unvisited by hope,
Unharassèd by fear, the deep he affects.
But now, his soul dethroned with Lucifer,
Madly he hies to call him to the war.

Nine days he volleyed through the astonished space,
Or poised himself within the jewelled cave,
The arcana viewing, and appeared a bird
Still ever flying, ever still confined
In cage of golden bars; or truer said,
As of the burnishèd Hesperides,
Its dragon all oblivious of the ports,
Should through the interior scour. Then wheeleth he,
And, grown disgusted with his fruitless search,
His flight he speedeth from the far-pierced south;
And, swifter by a hundred hundred fold
Than comet's course, makes towards the distant sun:
Within whose pale arrived, around the earth
He flies, and draws a fiery band, and this
Again right-angled with a flame, and ties
Them both fivefold; completing seven colúres.
Men gazed affrighted to behold the sign,
And augurs read there many a nation's doom:
The dusky Brahmin, in his white robes, viewed
At night from Pagod tower, what seemed a sword,
By wrathful Sheva waved; to western swart,
A monstrous firefly, running o'er night's page:
But unto Satan 't was intended be
A signal, that a subject great was near.
At length, alighting, he the broad Amazon
Surveys; then, restless, repursues his flight
Across the deep, and many a vessel smote
With novel lightning; such, the mariner

Had high described at home, had not the shock,
Reckless of home, sent him and craft below.
Over Madeira's heights he sped the next,
Blasting the vines, and throwing breakers wild
Upon the lea, threatening the isle devour:
Then shot to Britain, past her sister isle,
Bursting here ill to throw.
From the Nore's point he next aërial voyaged,
And left the earth and systems far below,
Rushing, like some wild boar amidst the woods,
Up through the peaceful skies: but ever towards
The north his route, though devious, he inclined;
And down at length he sank below the verge,
And came at last to where the heavens grow waste,
And stands opposed a second Erebus.
Then, first considered he since hell he left;
Now weighs, or enter, or the blank avoid.
Fate urges on, and slight of consequence,
And without fear he enters the unknown.
  Into this part, a region unexplored,
Had Satan entered many days before;
From his dark zone to kindred dark consigned,
Light nourished realms between. Behold his voyage.
From first he purely soared,—invisibly,
Awhile,—and swiftly trod the stairs, each stroke
Of wing a step,—that led him up towards light.
Yet long and drear the track, although the route
Bears home; long, drear, and dark the track 'twixt hell

And light; and long the gulf he wrought, as 't seemed
Abortively, and oft regards above
The brightest star,—even as mariner
Visits his compass, or the cynosure
Consults assiduous,—scarce brighter grew
Though posts he swiftly up. Thereat he aimed,
In deep abstraction, silent, and morose;
And fanned in taciturnity the deep,
Until, annoyed at sight of widening works,
Speech came his friend, and gloomy envy thus
In words found vent: "When will creating end!
When wearisome grow the task of breeding worlds,
And sealing himself in reservative pomp
For adulative lips? I, even I,
Demand not service such; if given, 't is well;
As well if 't be withheld. I know my state,
Nor need on 't to be told, by sycophant
Reminders: therein I date superior; if
Not so in power, which sole may due to chance,
In that in being 't was his me to precede;
Yet, in the noble matter of the will
I proud look down, look down and scowl,—
Perchance from unreal height, his rival high,
His everlasting foe; nor will I cease
'Gainst him to fight, though oft defeat,
Though baffled oft, not all inglorious,
For one great victory I have achieved,
When once I saw his hateful scion bleed,

Suffering sent hence to his." This said, he felt
Relieved, and steadily plied his vans, that now,
His visibility resumed, appeared
Two pulsing clouds, or paly, wavèd flags;
And for the space of three terrestial days
With matchless strength sustained the due ascent,
Albeit heavily armed. Stupendous task!
Tenfold the distance of the nebular stars
From this terrene to climb, but little way
Accomplished yet, though countless leagues, in that
Long voyage dark; beneath him hell, showing still
Like burning embers in the nether deep.
And now as one who long in mines has wrought,
At length comes awful through the wounded earth,
Thus up he flies, with clambering steep ascent,
Seeking his native element, the day.
Yet far from day is he, and through the night's
Dark chambers must traverse, on upright wing,
Laborious long, ere she permit escape
To dubious light. Nevertheless, he feels as one
From prison escaped, and rapidly he soars,
Leaving one half his melancholy beneath,
And sees at length the dark abyss illume.
As o'er the world, the dawn breaks after night,
So woke the gulf. The stars went out in turn,
Leaving that nighest one, Queen of the space,
Its solitary eye. Beneath him, Night,
Huge, and all sable, was in swift retreat.

Strange comfort unto him conveys the beam:
As over denizen of city pent,
Who, risen betimes, and passed the fœtid streets,
Now through green lanes aud meadows takes his way,
Comes gladness and a dayspring for his care,
So o'er the fiend insensibly a joy;
That now with heart more boon he parts the air,
All amber now the air, and through it rides,
Enflamèd, cloudless, with increasing fires
From glory into glory. Thus he scales
On stately pennons, or himself upthrows
In aërial bounds; sun basks, or drinks the calm
Voluptuous air, delicious draught to him,
Late from the land of stifling and of fog:
Thus up he comes, like lark unto the sun,
Himself appearing,—now enwrapped in blaze,—
Like to the lark of undiscovered fields,
Or the grim eagle of deep burning hills;
Until above him, hanging close the orb,
He now around it windeth spirally,
Concealed in light. Soon he superior floats,
And now down looks upon his radiant goal.
Great sight! last of its Maker's works, and hell
Most nigh. Wherefore so glorious, ask not:
God on the furthest confines of his deeds
May lavish grandeur, and nigh savageness
Plant highest skill; as near the desert rise
Those matchless pyramids, that awful sphinx,

Crude works of man: but this, the work of him
Whose work is man; whose work the angels are,
And all the sum of seen and unseen things.
He made the suns, that must to eye due placed
Appear the radiant godheads of the skies;
Gave them their glory, and upon their heads
Placèd bright crowns, wherewith to scare the night.
On this now Satan gazed, that like a throne
Appeared of living gold; a mountain fit
To bear the Deity: instinct with life
Appeared; in parts shewed fiery plumes, in parts
Wrought like the surface of a molten sea.
As on the gilded domes of eastern town,
Gazes grim chief of some beleaguering host,
Soon purposing assault, now he on this;
Then it more near approached, but warily:
As some abold intending ravisher,
Awed by his victim's beauty, loses rage,
So he of his intention, and abates
His speed, soon pausing in the void. Then he
Beheld, that which the most he sought, the signs
Of life intelligent; beholds long lapse
Of yellow vales, and seas of chrystalline,
And amber mountains, and upon them piles
Reared not unworthy heaven. This last sight changed
His mood, expecting not to see such life
Exalted there; he envying saw, and sad;
A sadness raised by raisèd memories:

Much he 's disturbed at the unlooked-for sight,
And thus at length in accents deep began:
"And must it be that every sight, not hell's,
Must me invariably remind of heaven?
Is there no middle realm, no lower land,—
Yet not so low but I might still sit high,—
No fair reversion—none; no land of hope,—
I will not say ambition,—that would nought
Suffice, save the high throne of Him that rules
In heaven? But could I not possess my soul
With some fair prospect not before beheld,—
My own creating,—created in soul,—
Some region bright, which, though but fantasy,
Might unto me be real, and hide or chase
These visions that intrude? This said, again
The prospect he surveyed, but nought save heaven
And glory lost perceived. Then sought for hell,
For gloom, for patch of shade; but nought of hell,
Nor shade, nor gloomy there; nought save the hell,
The gloom, within his breast! Then, in despair,
His monologue thus resumed: "'T is vain to strive!
That place, seen once, can never be forgot,
How much the less when cycles have been dwelt,
In honour dwelt, and high, and high renown.
Twice am I cursed,—once more than common lot,—
First, with my simple fall,—all they deplore,—
Last, with the mighty lapse of my descent.
Oh had it been my bent to have prevailed!

Or I 'd been made the meanest thing in heaven!
It had been well: safe in the citadel
Of either extreme. But placed in the mean,
Or rather, as it seemed, so nigh the head,
Yet room enough to oscillate betwixt
Each hazardous extreme; what could I do,
Save act the part I did? And what should He,
But or the deed undo, or else for ever me?
This would he do if he were just;
This could he do were he omnipotent;
But no, he holds me in his darksome pit,
Drives me from light when 'gins it yield me joy,
And gives to pain my years, and without hope
Of end. Eternity! eternity!
Eternity! ay, there 's the weight that whelms;
No limit to my wo's continuance;
Ordained for ever and for ever, doomed
By oath that shook the pillars of the deep,
To suffering and to grieve. Oh, is there no
Way left; no possibility, even yet,
Of a reprieve? Has he no treasure left
Wherewith to ransom me, who need it most?
Ah, miserably great, what shall I do?
Where succour seek? My doom, too sore to bear,
Who shall reverse! Cannot he gracious be?
Hath he no pity? Cannot his Son again——
Thoughts! whither would ye lead me? how debase,
Into what greater depths of misery plunge!

No, never shall it be, whilst myriad spirits,
Nay even whilst one,—forgot the unhurt powers
To call me recreant,—shall live, shall live
And groan, beneath the pain from which I seek
To escape. To owe myself to him, to whom
I owe my misery! But wherefore so?
Why do I rend me thus? Calm, calm thee, soul—
Mayhap some other plan might be devised;
Grace found for all—for all! what greater hell!
Oh that the king would them abolish all!
Or they survive,—where grace were ignominy
And I sole perish—perish here—even now—
Although I oft have shuddered at the thought,
And instant am upon a broad emprise.
From possibility of restoration cut,—
For will he all destroy, me to preserve,
Or duty bruise to heal rebellion?—
Edged in, empaled by adverse certainties,
What should I do, but call on him, Destroy.
Invoke, request,—first prayer, and last, since when
I him defied,—him to annihilate.
Nay, curse him, thrice blaspheme, amaze with sin;
Mock, flout, scoff, jeer, insult; deride his hell;
His angels challenge, call to arms his Son,
Himself dare to the field, which even now
I do!"

He ceased, and calmed his act,—at length
So violent grown, with arms upraised high

Above his head, he seemed a flame tossed to
And fro, in hug of writhing winds,—and stood
Awaiting the expunging stroke. It came not, and
He thus: "Cold, and yet hot, he heeds me not;
Disdain, the worst of arrows far to bear,
Pours on me thick. How shall I guess a sin,
How horribly shall I transgress; what crime
Yet unconceivèd shall I perpetrate,
Provoke him to annul! Nay, nay! that will
Not answer me; that were not punishing;
'T were not his worst me to annihilate;
It were me to sustain, through lapses vast,
Duration infinite, and ceaselessly
Afflict. Ah, terrible conclusion! fell
Resolve! that for one fault could so forget
Many virtues—could me thus consign to ruin.
Yet is it destiny; nor he, than I,
Less subject thereto, though more fortunate.
Who is the maker of himself? controls his heart?
Who is in justice held accountable?
Even he, supposèd Sovereign of all,
Is but a servant of a secret fate;
Is but my fellow, though he seem my lord:
The task to him assigned he must perform:
Heaven must be mine, or I not enter it:
Subjected I must be, or must subject.
So do I find in cold philosophy
Refreshment sad; with reason shake his peace,

Who find my best in still provoking war.--
Then war be mine, whose'ever is success;
Come war forthwith, come war eternally;
Punish he will, as punish me he must,
For never can transgression in me cease,
Unchangeable, who such abundance have
Of foul revenge, for fouler yielded pains.
Though heaven be not the field, nor my wide ranks
O'erthrow his numbers, and to him suggest
His bettered thunder; nor the pigmy earth
Destroyèd be by our hostilities,
Within my breast I bear, the war's true seat,
An infinite hatred, that, within the deep,
Or coasting dareful his empyrean,
Still finds me arms; though in despair be found
Scorns to submit; although repulsed, and void
Of one soft cheering thought, my future's store,
Still scorns the choice of truce; yea, would contemn
Favor not earned, accept no proffered grace;
Though sealed in hell, though chained upon its throne,
Would from my bosom hurl 'gainst him my spite.
So farewell hope, I in despair find strength;
Begone remorse, and curse the conqueror;
Adieu, all thought that does not breathe of war:
Though glory be not gained, where is the loss
To him who 's in perdition! Hell me incites
With the remembrance stern of doleful hours,
And speaks in thunder from her distant shore

With tongues of flame. Wrongs numerous I have,
And the necessity to be his foe,
Who not forgive, and cannot be forgiven;
All urge me to my aim."
He ceased, and swift
Approached the orb, intending on it t' alight,
Still from it far as hence unto the moon,
But finds himself soon sidelong circling 't round,
Motion each stroke doth but accelerate;
And persevering, oft the bright sphere cirqued,
And it enmapped to many a golden realm,
To find some guardless point: till came belief
Omnipotence had barrèd his approach,
And with a fence invisible and strong
Set his design at nought. Then, as some beast
That, baffled by the sire, might from him turn
And on the children vent his savage ire,
He towards the largest of the satellites
Directs his course. Thereon, with all his might,
He strives to rush, or gain by artifice,
Hurling his vastness, like an engine huge,
Headlong towards his wish: a vain attempt!
Nor less in vain the efforts that he made
To reach other suns, and other satellites,
Imperial suns, and princely satellites,
Whereon fair creatures dwelt from him secure.
Long he endeavoured to these orbs attain;
But filled with anger, now, he past such flies

Through the wan vault, due to familiar earth,
On which alight as on his own domain,
Brooding, he thus at length in thought revolved.
"Who knows the bridge on which may evil pass!
Who knows the chain on which may ruin run;
The path that evil stalks! though unto them
Denied access, to me they may come off.
Existence brighter shall my aspect seem,
With courteous signal and sweet beckoning,
A friend from heaven. This lapse will I repair;
Dilapidation, or unseemly hurt,
Cover, or else remove. Be they but free
As I, or once were earth's—if earth's, or I
Were free, and not the thralls of fate; and free
They must to do him honour, if honour 't is
He seeks, and glory, good, benignantly
Received, nor wreck for those who fail: and not,
As pain and reas'ning oft cause me to declare,
In making things for misery finds delight,
There yet is hope; and being hope; joy, bliss,
Such bliss to wound the wounder from his own bow,—
Be I his own by stern, creative right,
And sore propriety,—and splinters from his
Own shafts, as these his own for certain may,
Since I have seen him nobler things evoke,
To make unhappy him, for how else can it,
If feelings he possess? though all who fall
Were reprobate of doom, since unto me

Their fall produces joy; gives joy to me,
The object of his hate. Therefore, though foiled
In this my outset, will I not abate,
Therefore, though baffled, will I not desist —
Repulse familiar is, and this is but
Delay. Although by force o'ercome, yet may
I circumvent; this is my better home,
This do I more than equally share with him;
Here will I halt, and re-construct my plans
By late experience." This said, he arose,
And with a fiendish smile surveyed fields
So foully got. Awhile he gloating hung;
Then, like a tall perambulative beam,
Or fixèd like a pillar of the day,
Glided, or stood perpensive. O'er the herb,
Proud in its summer loveliness, he strayed,
Leaving it seared and fallen; and amongst the woods
Went like the breeze disparting their woofed tops.
On them he lookèd down, and on the hills;
Nor had the top of Babel reached his loins:
His head touched the meridian, and his feet
Appeared two radiant pools; and on his face
Gorgonian, and vast, sat mischief crowned:
Too great for earth he shewed, for heaven too foul:
Earth shuddered as he trod.

Book Fourth.

Round rolls the year, and seasons four return,
To nourish man, and honor God: and moons
Still wax and wane, and with their varied lights,
Even from the solemn crescent of their youth,
To the full orbed magnificence of night,
Invest the earth; and I return,—mayhap
To win slight praise, mayhap to earn huge scoff,—
To task beloved. Hail, pleasant toil! yet not
To me a toil, as now around me hangs
Silence and peace; to me no toil indeed,
Whose highest delight it is, at morn, or noon,
Or through the hourèd day; or else at eve,
Or trenching on the night, when sleep should swathe;
Or breaking from its tenderness, as now,
Uprising ere the shrill-voiced bird of morn,
Hath shouted day. Chief unto me thou art;
Divine employ, the bliss of life; to me
Who in obscurity do cheat the hours of life;
Do cheat with thee the wasting hours of life,
Fleeting and few. No passion rivals thee,

Save that which prompts to gaze on nature's face.
Deep laud to thee, and full ascription high,
Power that ordainèd nature's face, and gave
To man the taste and faculty to enjoy;
Deep laud to thee, and full ascription high,
Source, and prime object, of transcendent song!
Giver of gift, what gift soe'er in me.
Thee should I praise at early morn, or eve,
Or through the tacit night, or varied year,
Or life's more varièd vicissitudes.
Still guard me, Maker, still, though still unseen,
From outward harm, and from interior bane;
Watch o'er my steps, who am myself but blind,
Nor let thy comfort be to me denied.

Now had the earth once on her axis turned,
Bearing her foe, and foe of all her kind;
Determined to pursue his foul design,
And in the ruin of strange worlds to seek
Relief unto the anguish of his own.
At noon he came, alighting on this isle;
At midnight rose from India to the air;
But ere he spurned this globe, with irony
It thus bespake: "Adieu, thou little orb,
First fruit of hatred, and of bold attempt,
And ever shalt remain my eldest born,
How num'rous soe'er my future progeny;
Though absent now, I will ere long return:

Thou now must bide with lesser of my care,
And scantier cherishing. Thou art a babe
Whose time has come be weaned: sufficient long
Hast thou monopolised my servants' breasts;
Their hour is come, their warnings cry, 'Increase,'
And thou must drop the teat. Albeit thou shalt
Not lack of feeding stripes; of woes, and pains
Those cates prepared for me; thy stepsire I,
Who will them yield thee in wholesome degree,
For sake of him who though he thee begat,
Did in time past, unnatural, cast thee off."
He scoffed, and riding high into the air,
Observed an instant the decrescent moon,
And Lucifer, bright star; and, soaring still,
Deeply descried the sun, bordering the earth
With fire. That night star-seers told strange eclipse,
And blinkings so protracted and complete,
That the charmed orbs seemed summed in veiling lids.
With diligence he soared, or, truer said,
With speed to man were unimaginable;
For makes he now not to the nighest star,
But to the milky way, that maze of stars,
Aspired; and such his wing, that long ere morn
Knocked at the dusky portals of our east,
He had arrivèd there; there hung subdued,—
Such power hath perfect beauty and sublime,—
And trancèd, heard the rolling spheres attune,
Each with a godlike voice; and pealing loud,

Or soft, with billowy undulation make
Their wondrous song; enrapt there hung,
Snatched from himself, and borne away, as 't were,
Within bright cloud to old Elysium.
Even as an exile, who on sudden hears
An air of home, is instantly inspired
By the lost feelings that once filled his past,
Returnless, unexpatriated years,
Forgetting that he ne'er shall visit more
Home, nor behold his native landscape smile,
So for awhile the lost Archangel dwelt.
Nor was his eye less ravished than his ear:
An arch star-formed stretched o'er the welkin wide,
Fairer than Iris, when she lays her bridge
From each horizon, and by much more huge;
Uprising with its sapphire towers, and thence
With mighty minarets, whose ulterior spires
Lost their remoteness in concealing clouds.
Upon its crown, a shield of diamond,
Like to an upright sea o'erwhelmed with blaze.
Around was shed the shimmery moonlight, and
The approach thereto was untrod day. But soon
His humour changed: hate, soon within him stirs—
His curse to love, which aye must turn to hate, —
And foulest wish of hatred born. As might
A wingèd Titan 'fore Jove's threshold hang,
Now he 'fore this malign. A sinistrous look
He earliest gave it; then, disgust throws o'er

His baleful visage; and at length high scorn.
Anon, his anger boils, his eyes dart fire,
Destructive wishes seize his mind, and he
In his imagination bringeth down the whole.
At length his whole face settled into scowl,
And in these words he vents his pride and rage:
"Here, take me in! one greater than thyself,
More eminent in state, far brighter once—
Nobler than matter now, howe'er arranged,
Or all the countless souls within,—though summed
In one bright thought,—that heightens thine appraise."
And with the words he threw out wide his vans,
Entering the glorious. If he had admired
Without, much more within deserved his gaze.
A vault he saw, with which compared, our own
Had seemed pygmean. A vault immense appeared,
Whose walls, and floor, and roof were primrose light,
Beset with disks of gold, each disk a sun.
Planets, and asteroids, whilst their revolves
Aspersed with music the delicious clime,
Performed mosaic, and close-kissing fires,
Frequent device. The Almighty's symbol saw
He in all place; pendent o'er mount, and plain,
And sombre dell: the streams reflect its image,
And exhalations bear it as they rise,
A kindled sign. As o'er some vestibule
Might haste a stranger, whetted by what there,
To see the grander pageantry within,

So he with muffled wings, and sees the scene
Disclose, as some august interior
From undrawn valves. Where'er he turns, he views
The softened image of remembered heaven.
The birds are quiring high, the mobile orbs
Roll like the music of the seraphim.
Higher than heaven it seemed, broader than earth,
And happier than Elysian fields. God here hath built,
With lavish goodness and superior strength,
A minor heaven, on which he downward breathes
Celestial fragrances from out his lips,
And soft distils himself on every heart.
Oh how unlike the dread abode of hell!
Clouds hung fantastic in the prismal hues,
Or crept in sober stole upon the breeze.
The hills, rising like the eternal pyramids
Above the plain, or in Cordilleras,
From the pure air so clear, and well defined,
Seemed Teneriffes, or Andes, formed of gold.
Sparkled the streams, and waved the vasty woods,
And slope and valley in green verdure smiled.
The plains, more wide than western prairies are,
Were roamèd o'er by the stupendous brood;
Mammoth, or heavy-footed mastodon,
The pachydermi, and what else of bulk—
Even such as trod the earth in their fair day,
When nobler were her creatures, and when she,
Mayhap from out her strong primeval womb,

And loud with noise of elemental throes,
Full grown them yeaned. Nor lackèd there the might,
And her familiar present loveliness.
Here, stood the elephant, and rhinoceros;
The tiger there, and nigh, the leopardess;
The eagle here fed, and close browsed the lamb.
The mocking bird, and the full-tonèd thrush
Pipèd their measures; upon the same bough,
Half somnolent, the wood-cat listening.
Over the broad savannahs sang the grasshopper,
And from the gloom of boughs, the nightingale.
The hawk, and sparrow, and the timid hare;
The wily fox, and mottled baying hound,
Sported together in their elements.
All these he saw, and heard; all these, and more;
For in these regions high, fortunate fields,
All yet is pristine; yet, the gold undimmed;
The gem's keen gloriousness by tears undrained:
There, gems abound, and things called precious; streams,
Whose crystal waters roll o'er beds of gold;
And trees whose leaves might heal the nations; such
As saw Saint John in Patmos' vision blessed.
One jasper river windeth down the midst,
'Twixt banks of never-withering amaranth,
On which huge trees of aromatic woods
Growing bear fruits divine, repast for gods;
Gigantic trunks, whose boughs temple the winds,
And as these psalm it upon every spray,

Wave the green banners of a forest shade.
This stream is common held, its source, above;
And at its outlet forms a noble bay,
Where oft in fleets the inhabitants unite
To form, where nought else is, a higher holiday.
On it they glide in skiffs of joyfulness,
Chaunting high hymns harmonious, or else
In converse sweet, and affluent of thought, —
Or strike the harp, or breathe the flute, or horn;
Or ply the band that music reigns afar, —
Or anchored by some lonely island small,
Attune the voice to such rare harmonies,
That angels listening steal the strain for heaven.
Oft comes their jubilee; not fifty years,
Not half an age must vanish ere they exult
Like unto slaves in sudden liberty; —
They free are ever, and perpetually
Take their delight upon the blissful stream,
Still ever virgin, ever to them new;
Nor shipwreck fear, nor fear satiety.
High is the lot of these; fair, blessed, and high.
There, nought annoys, for there knows yet no sin.
The elements, all kind, sting not or ere
They benefit; frost, and the uncomfortable thaw,
Are there unknown; fogs, and the reeking breath
Of winter hoarse: there blows no wintry wind,
No eastern gale that brings the sullen clouds:
No summer scorches fierce, no autumn disappoints;

No spring comes premature; no drought consumes
The brooks, no floods destroy the plains; no blight,
No mildew comes, but all is bliss. Thus blessed,
They dwell in neighbourhood of heaven, and breathe
Perpetual health. Thus blessed they dwell, nor know
Labour exacted as life's price: unspared
The morning calling to imperious task,
And travail binding 'neath the heats of noon.
There be who light count toil; would fain persuade
The manual labourers that their task is boon;
Jehovah's formal and emphatic curse
Void,—nay, a blessing to the frame and soul.
These are not labourers; but sleeky ones
Whom the forced sweat ne'er tarnished of their shine,
Nor want ere placed at task inexorable;
These are not labourers; nor difference know
'Twixt sinews aching from hilarious sport,
And painèd thews of o'erwrought artizans:
Nor yet consider they their brethren, who,
Forced to sad exile in their native land,
Incarcerate them through the stretch of day,
And half the doleful lapses of the night,
To furnish forth their lighter luxuries.
But in these climes, where curse not shakes, nor sin
Has introducèd shame, want vexes not;
No sandals need their feet, no drapery
Their limbs; they toil not, nor have lack; where'er
They be, is food; where'er they thirst, is drink;

Where'er they wander, still is Paradise.
In one fair sum, their being is joy,
Their looks, shewn innocence; their breasts, the arks
Of peace; their tongues, praise occupies; of heaven 's
Their speech; love is their whole; nor do their years
To race in which are no ignoble forms,
Convey disease, decrepitude, nor death.
'Midst such, now Satan; and his course he held
High o'er the stream, and saw within its depths
Himself reflected like to flying cloud.
As o'er the Amazon, that may date its rise
Midst Andean heights of virgin snows sublime,
Might float the air-born skiff; so he o'er this;
This lovelier far, and of unmeasured length,
Whose stretch is not through a mere continent,
But myriad worlds' extent: far up he flew,
Baleful, and with spread pinions; but alighting now,
As on the garden the pernicious wasp,
With folded wings, straight falleth to partake
Of largess offering round. The air he scents,
Owning it fragrant, and the odorant breath
Of spices catches on his wings. These were,
Though now more damaged by his torrid clime
Than sails of vessel by the round world's winds,
A monstrous pair, and many a time in heaven
Had veiled his face, as 'fore the Eternal's throne
He him had worshipped; and, in her mid-air,
Full oft had seemed two mighty gonfalons,

Where silver laboured with the fiery gold;
As 'fore the multitudinous he ruled,
For home in their flying marches over heaven,
He hung advanced—now, dreadful vehicles,
Beneath hell's cope, through storm and tornado;
'Midst fire, and adverse billows of her main,—
Hell's fiery main,—or up and down through space,
In darkness, or brief light, him to transport.
These, he surchargeth all their scaly folds,
And loads with perfume and the soothing balm;
Through every pore the gentle zephyrs leads.
This done, he gathers light, and his dark parts
Scathed by the expulsive bolt, falsely restores,
And o'er his forehead throws a wash of joy,
To hide hell's grief; and, harlot like, rubs in
The glory of the morn upon his cheek,
Stolen with his finger from high eastern hill.
His arms he next attends; his shield and spear
Gives higher lustre; and, his cased sword,
Pregned with tenfold fires. Then, from the ground
He springs, and heaves himself soon to mid-air;
And through its balmy tide, that seems life's food,
The etherial food for immortality,
Delicious wings. Ere long, he is lost to view,
Or but a mote appears, that floateth nigh;
And spies at length two twin-like orbs, whose rays,—
Like golden rods, converged to golden rods,—
Formèd betwixt the spheres a hanging bridge.

Therewards he turned his course, and, soon arrived,
Alights upon its midst. Its myriad bars
Jarrèd strange discord! but he little cares,
And up he strode at once with awful grace,
Yet vigilant; against his shoulder leaned
His spear immeasurable; behind him hung
His cloud-like shield; his sword upon his thigh;
And saw ere long approaching him a form
Not less in beauty than the host of heaven;
Its aspect feminine, though of noble mould;
Naked, and towards him coming with a step
Seemed trod to music of her native spheres.
Her eyed he curious, not with desire,
For such instinct is not in creatures who
Are not themselves by races multiplied;
But rather pleasèd that her excellence
Should more contribute to his great revenge.
This ever uppermost, thus he thought, surprised:
"Ah, art thou Queen of here! an Empress thou,
Compared with her of paradise: she, Queen
Of it, and more, who ruled its King, her lord:
She, meet to be translated to the heavens;
Thou, as descended therefrom in thy pride.
Advance, advance, fair sister, grander prize,
May I succeed with thee, as once with her,
Lacking the curse."
They now encountered;
And she, apprehending envoy from the skies,

Made low obeisance unto him, the which
He not regarded, but pursued his way,
And, wondering, she in silver tones began:
"And is it thus a heaven-born passes by!
An envoy from our God? Wherefore is this?
No haste employs thy wing, but with slow foot
Thou treadst the ground, for thee no medium,
Didst thou desire despatch. What! onwards yet!
Didst thou not mark me, lofty power serene?
Wrappèd mayhap in thy beatitude,
And sacred thoughts. Didst thou not hear my voice,
That welcomed thee — and will thee o'er again:
Hail, Awful, from on high; welcome to ours,
Though low; return, or bid me thee approach."
And he not heeding, — "And wilt thou not regard!
What have I done? my soul accuses not —
If thou dost love me, speak; if thou dost love
Me, turn towards me thy face." The fiend turned round,
And his tremendous front to her opposed,
O'erwhelming nigh the sense, and stood awhile,
A feeble smile of pity and contempt
Around his mouth, and a quiescent eye
Upon her loosely fixed: when she resumed:
"Ah, now I see thou smilst, yet does thy brow
Accord scarce with thy lip; to sternness it
Seems set, and formèd ruggedly, as is
Indeed thy whole. — Thou 'rt strangely fashioned,
And differing far from aught I 've seen before;

Thy silence, not less strange;—what meaneth this?
Each bringeth fear, to me a feeling new;
Yet wherefore should I fear? for fear is guilt's;
Why should I quail at thee, or from thee shrink:
Why quail at thee, because thou 'rt singular?"
"To be without a similar is mine;"
Slowly responds the fiend. "Not 'midst all heaven's
Sublimest sanctities, one with me pairs;
Thou needest fear none that are celestial,
Nor of th' infernals whilst I am thee nigh."
To which the fair: "Thy words should reassure."
"Then be assured," the fallen spirit answered;
"Let not thine ignorance be obstruction, which
Shall keep thy soul from knowledge, nor yet let
Surprise continue, but, demand of me."
And she obeying; "Who art thou? what thy name?
What mean these shapes thou bearest?" To which he,
Sententious; "These shapes are signs of power."
When she immediately; "Thou needst not signs,
Thou powerful art, as eyes and conscience tell,
As all are powerful, and enclothed in might,
Who from on high descend—yet none shew much
As thee." Then he, with pride: "'T is that I am
The chief, and come the nearest God: wouldst thou
Be more divine? if so, converse with me."
To which she falteringly responds; "I would,
For so our God hath willed; oft comes himself
And answers tongue with tongue; so condescends

To us his creatures low; I would, for thou
Art of his ministers; they who behold
His greater glory, and of yore, his works
Marvellous, observed appearing as his hand
Put forth its might. Grand theme! but to converse
With thee; or, with thee commerce hold in aught,
I must confess, strikes me with fear, and first
Experienced dread. Yet do I not know why—
Thy eminence ought to cause me feel more blessed
To have thy wisdom offered,—save 't were thine
Unusual guise, and as unusual burdens."
To which the fiend: "Discard thy groundless fears;
Yet beautiful, and make me more thee love,
These tremulous doubts: they 're as the sightless strings
That run through heaven, and bind as heart to heart:
One feels, and feeleth all; even now, I own
Communicated joy, from nigh the throne,
At thy humility." The fair one hung
Her head, like to an o'ersunned flower, scorched by
The beam should nourish only, and deep blushed;
Then thus replied confused: "If humble I,
Then myriads here are more. I do but speak
As passion in me prompts; they can at length
With soberness descant; if with some warmth
My words, the fervour 's in my heart, to him
The thanks, as his for every gift, who hath
It kindled there." The mock archangel bent.
As bows the silver pine, or hoary smoke

Exhaled from sacrifice before the gust,
So he; then gracefully rose to his full height,
And, on her looking down, emphatic said:
"This is the first I 've visited these climes,
Till now in heaven,—though ere 't was formed I dwelt
Its former's friend,—and its nigh equal heights,
Hath been my great employ. Vouchsafed at length
Visit this lower form, thou are the first
To receive, or I instruct." Then solemnly
She answered: "He whom our Sire hath sent
Receive we, and with thanks, and 'bundant joy;
So much more thee, the broadest stream from the
Great deep of truth; more given, where 's given so much;
Denying not himself: but thou art so—
Repulsive, shall I say?—mayhap 't is being
So palpably sublime;—fain would I learn,
And yet would not,—would not, at least from thee,—
Forgive me this—forgive me, bounteous sire!—
Go on, in thee, I see his delegate,
In thee, I see himself; speak, for I list,
Though thrilled with awe." To which replied the fiend:
"Thou hast well said: I am even as himself;
Thine acute sense perceives stern majesty,—
For God is stern,—impressed upon my brow:—
Millions of ages have elapsed since I
Was first installed his mate; and gravity
Doth best become the starter of past time.
Hear then my errand, nor mistake these traits,

Believe that wisdom habits in my front,
And that mine eye hath caught almighty fire ;—
What though my speech seem harsh! harsh sounds are
The breaking thunder is his lifted voice, [heaven's;
And oft it rends the wide empyrean,
That 'midst thick darkness dreams of being dissolved,
Yet when it ceases elevates our joy."
To whom the woman, in tone subdued, and chill :
" I dare not cavil, but thy doctrine 's strange,
And differs wide from Raphaël's loving notes ;
And more, from that in God himself we prove :
He seems not stern ; his eyes seem formed of love,—
How much he loves us let all things declare!—
His brow favours not thine : the presence which
It pleases him to assume unto our sight,—
And could he so dissemble? Surely not!—
Is clear, benign, not dread—thou who so long
Has dwelt propinquant to his throne, methinks
Thou more shouldst answer to thy neighbourhood :
But this forgive, mayhap I do mistake,
And my heart's current from thee retrocedes,
When it should towards thee rush : again, high throne
Proceed. What dost thou mean by thunder?" Then
The fiend ; " Thy maker's voice when wroth." Then she,
Surprised ; " And is he wrath in heaven?" Then he,
" Ofttimes at sinners—hast thou not heard of those,
Rebellious, that refused to hear his Son,
To them commissionèd? So I to thee,

To all thy cognate race: thy Sire hath said,
Bow to my legate, worship him; call him
Your Lord, your God." To which she, thunderstruck;
"And hath our Sire said this?" To whom the fiend;
"Have I not said he hath?" Then she, in terror;
"How shall I do this thing—how say, what is
In truth a lie?" "Dost thou me charge with guile?"
Demands the fiend: when she, "Alas, alas,
Forgive me, but methought thou camest to teach,
To make us still more wise; to shew us more
Of him, who oft times shews himself; 't is true
All here 's his work; methought thou camest to speak
Us truly blest; and further shew the good
In store for us." To which the fiend; "I did,
But, as the key to treasures that I bring,
It is enjoinèd, that thou dost fall down,
Enunciate the form I 've uttered thee."
Silent, the Sinless hung, in fit of agony;
When thus, in tones of menacing, the fiend:
"Dost thou withstand thy God, thou weakest worm,
That by his will exists!" When, startled, she:
"Oh spare me this, thou noblest hierarch;
Spare, spare me this; postpone thy mission, let
This realm be called to such a seriousness."
"When he commands, 't is thine forthwith to obey;
Who doubts, elsewhere, is damned; and it may prove
That hesitation here may raise his wrath;"—
The tempter answered; and, with passion, she:

" Oh strait beyond endurance! mystery!
Oh sudden, keen necessity to resolve!
What shall I do? how steer between these perils?
Whom shall I seek? If I am froward towards heaven,
Vain there, and dangerous; if I of thee,
Already have I smitten 'gainst thy rock—
Despair divides me, and my plight distracts!—
What if I should commit a fault, such as
My like consented rashly unto once,
Upon an orb, whose orb from this we see."
Then he, as more surprised: " Imaginest thou
I 'm Satan?" and instantly, morn, wash of joy,
And stolen light disappeared; and she recoiled
Aghast, and thus cried out aloud: " Avaunt!
Thou wicked one; thy name is on thee writ."
And with the words the balcony he leaped,
Into the blue abyss.—Thus triumphed she.—
But what befel the scared enemy?
Even as a diver lustily descends,
And rises far from where he disappeared,
So he, discomfited; and many suns
Passed by, between his vanishing and rise;
And in the form of native couchèd beast,
Upon the banks of that fair noble stream,
Cat-like, with droopèd lids, 'twixt which he peered,
Next cogitates perplexed. Thereon he lay,
Watchful, until approaching skiff, whose prow
Made tinkling music with the waves, caused him

To take the tide. But not in bestial mien.
A faultless youth's is now his chosen guise,
And, hailing the swift barque in their own tongue,—
From heaven, as said, derived,—soon he them boards.
A beauteous maid sat in the stern, and steered;
Age occupied the bow, and in the sheets
Sate wedded love. Deeply the maiden blushed,
As, seated by her side, straight he relieves
Her from the gentle task. Anon, his arms
Around her glide; and in her ear his lips
Pour the soft tide of love.—Oh, wonder not
That she at once consents! What next ensued?
Straight to the bank he steered, and to a grove
Due led her, and therein the nuptial knot
Swiftly prepared to tie. But watchful heaven
Forbade, for lo! there came a silent bolt,
And 'midst the stems him dashèd many a league.
Foiled in the fruitful hope, the wish, to graft
On innocence his own depravity,
Far up the realm he sped; Tartarian shaped,
And upon pinions that sullen roared;
And, star-alighted, now upon a plain
Walked amidst woodlands, a sequestered spot;
Sylvan, umbrageous, and unfrequented:
A seat molestless, where the ring-doves cooed,
And swallows coursèd, and the stately swan
Rowed on the distant waters; whilst the lark,
He of the welkin, soaring denizen,

Poured from the firmament his full heart down;
And where the melody of a hundred spheres
Descended solemn, or, travérsing, came
Like a rich cargo wafting into port,
In one subdued, half-murmured madrigal,
Borne on the shoulders of the cherub winds.
There, soon a male inhabitant he meets,
Of noble mien, and a half-martial air;
And whom in sudden and inflated style
He thus accosts: "Hail! sword prepared for war,
Hail! elect conqueror; thee have I found,
Worthy of all thy race, these realms subdue;
Receive thy power, o'ercome, and mount thy throne."
To which the man: "Who art thou? what thy name?"
To whom the fiend: "My name 's Munificent,
Merit-discerner, Empire-giver, so take thine."
"These are not thine bestow," the man replied,
"These appertain to Him, proprietor is
Of all; and thou, though mighty dost thou seem,
Must be his pensioner! I know thee, thou
Art Satan." Unto whom the fiend, as pleased:
"Sayest thou so?—'t is well; therein do I
Behold thy higher spirit; even that
Which fitteth thee for empire. Thou art right
In thy surmise; I am he who long ago
Fought with, and conquered, thy divinity;
And had him thrown whence ne'er he had arisen,
But that compassion prompted me to leave

Him shadowy sovereignty. Seest thou these scars,
This front intrenched, this stern expression, whence
My countenance even yet has not recovered?
These are the changes wrought on me by that
Encounter dire, which him so injured;
No more could he have wandered 'midst you here,
But that I grant him to surround his shame
With goodness' humble guise." To which, the man:
"Can heaven this hear and not annihilate!"
To whom the fiend: "Nay, life and death are mine,
Who, risking all, attained the sum of things;
Power to dispose of old, and bring forth new,
In one grand struggle that half ruined heaven—
My native right, and just prerogative,
Dared to assert; nor failed I to make good
With this right arm, that did subvert his throne,
And made him sue to me with piteous wails;
Vanquished, forlorn, the where he lately ruled;
Around him strewn the wreck of all his engines."
"Oh, hearst thou not, thou Omnipresent One?
Ear of the world, and eye, and powerful arm
It to sustain, and even this uphold
Who taunts thee thus, with horrid blasphemies
Emptying his heart, and with insurgent lies!"
Exclaimed the man with up-directed gaze.
"Why shouldst thou call on him," responds the fiend;
"Who hears thee not, or, if indeed he do,
Cannot now interfere? I thee intend

To be my minister. I who have made
Thee; and these countless worlds hold by the right
Of a true conqueror." He said; and now
The man, with indignation swollen; "Avaunt!
Blasphemer, lying foe, whom Michaël once
Divided: Raphael hath spoken of thee,
And Zephaon; we know thy tale; avaunt!
Profane not here." To whom the fiend, with frown:
"Hath Raphael then belied, and Zephaon?—
They for 't shall suffer; myrmidons! whom I
Permit yet circle his throne.—But these as may;
Blast thou not thy fair chance, election mar,
And earn my hot displeasure: honour courts
Thy brow; reject her not; thy lips, unsealed,
Long to deliver law; thy shoulders wait
To bear the monarchy: felicitous
Art thou, didst thou but know thy grace." To which
The other, imperative; "Hence, flatterer, vile!
Whose form thy chastisement exhibits; hence! lest
Ithuriel, or perhaps Michaël come, eject
Thee, here defiling." To which the fiend, with scorn:
"Thinkest thou I Michaël fear, or all the troop,
Since their superior I have known reduce?
Mark well these limbs—scarce sample bear of power;
This length of spear, to them sight-blasting shield:
Do they appear able me subjugate?"
"Power is from God, whose sole is power;" the man
Replied, stern: "what power thou hast is his—

Hideous thou seemst for all thy nobleness;
Thou bearest sin imprinted on thy face;
And thy whole form bears marks of punishment."
"Fatal mistake!" retorts the infernal king;
"I but assumed my right, which now I hold,
Though with a price 't was purchased, and for power;
Power is indeed for all, who have the power,
And daring power to appropriate.—See these
Brave disks, each one a world, of which my shield,
New comer bright, seems emulous; these light-
Reared walls that stretch a universe; and all
The sense, and happiness-yielding soul therein,
Await the grasp of thee.—What wouldst thou then?
Is it thou lackest might? of me request:
Legions are at thy beck." To whom the man
Replied, "Wouldst thou I 'd crave of thee; become
Thy suppliant? vile! what hast thou to give
But what is ill: poor, thou bestowst not fear;
I scorn thy terribleness." To whom Satan moved;
"Nay, brave me not. I 'd give thee only good,
Augment thy happiness, glory put round
Thy brow, and seas of joy; hang beauties round
Thy neck in warm festoons; their blandishments,
And ever new delights, sumptuous on thee
Bestow. Towards thee their hearts I 'd draw, that thou
Shouldst riot in their love. This world should be
For thee a harem solo; perpetual change
And constant appetite on thee should wait.

And yield thee sapid charms; on thee be rained
Sharp pleasures, sweetest hours; that not a God
Should be so blessèd in his loves as thou,
Unchallenged rover on the lusty wild."
He said, but seeing the stellant's countenance
Lowering with wrath, resumed; "Beware, beware,
That scornest one could drown in rapturous floods,
Could steep thee in strange fires—nor steep alone,
But quench, 'whelm in unimaginable thrills.—
What now thy powers of sense? like folded leaf
I' th' bud; these shall expand, some deference paid
To me; co-equal to become, and even
Outgrow the sensual campaign: for thou
Shalt wax in lust, become the forest oak,
The high sky-sweeping palm, the baobab
Enormous, and what else thy thoughts can form:—
Arouse thee, stripling one, arouse: delight,
Delight awaits, and red desire—pygmean!
Lift up the dwarfed stature of thy aims,
And see the sight before: see, where they lie,
Recumbent Goddesses; each with a lip
On which hangs rosy joy, and eyes to gulf
Thee in their glad profounds, and arms to press
The passions from thy soul.—On banks of thyme,
And purple lavender, on nature's broad
And frolic-loving lap, thou shalt disport
With these my daughters of the radiant clime
The live-long day, and dark and wanton night;

Whilst golden years from out potential urns
Shall pour etherial ardours through thy veins:
What sayst thou now?" To which the stellant loud
Replied: "Hence! tempter fly, or fly I quick
From thee: disgust, thou now evokest, and my
Contempt: hadst thou this power, thy favour I 'd
Despise." To whom Satan, surprised, "Thou doubtst!
Deemst me unable? put me to the proof;
Retire along with me, and a whole band
Of beauties yield thee bliss." "Strong are thy wiles,"
The man exclaimed, and fell upon his knees,
Feeling his imminence, and silent called
On God; then springing to his feet, outcried:
"Come, Michael, down, and blest Ithuriel;
And chase this dragon to his proper pit."
Straightway a glorious light, like a vast tube,
Or tapering cylinder, stretched down from heaven;
And quickly, rumbling sounds and mighty haste
Within reverberate, and issued soon
The called deliverers. Meanwhile, enraged,
The form of Satan lurid grew, and large,—
Tempestuous sight!—and waved his torrent hair.
"Cowards!" then, he cried, and drew his falchion,
That spewed flames, and from his back fierce swung
His ponderous shield; "Must two of you descend,
Darèd not one contemplate me engage?
Inferior, back, or on hell's meanest call,
Who quick shall come, and bruise thy shining coat."

Then, unto Michaël: "Pray, who art thou?"
Who to the fierce one thus replied: "Whom I?
Thou knowest well: I am he who shared thee once
On the bright plains of heaven; with dismal shade
Oppressed that day, unwonted, and the following,
Known for o'erwhelmèd engines—that first day
Of war primeval, when, before thy crew
Thou didst withstand me, and provoked my sword
To do its office; instrument unknown,
And office likewise, until then, when woke
Original vengeance, that in heaven allowed
Tumult and warfare, and, amongst thine own,
Mangling and pain; nor, least upon thyself,
When, all disfigured, thou contortive writhed
Helpless before me, and at mercy lay,
Obnoxious, stricken, nor could fight nor fly,
Till on sad shields they bore thee gnashing fierce,
In moping darkness to thy chariot,
Dishonoured, foul: I 'm he who once in heaven
Did this, empowered; and now, by aid of Him
Who me hath sent, intend no less on this,
Thee hence not hurrying." To whom the fiend,
With passionate scorn: "Ah, now I know thee indeed;
Heaven's lieutenant! Thou 'rt he the Thunderer sends,
When these grow querulous; from the empyrean thou.—
But know, immaculate caitiff, thou who swearst
Nightly to falsehood, and recurring days,
With fulsome songs purchasest station; know,

The king of hell confronts thee; he, who dared
Refuse to bow where he had right to stand:
Intends retry our virtues: know, that soon,
Though once the chosen temper of thy blade
Gave the advantage, know, that now I bring
Tormenting sharpness, and obduracy
That all hell's fire resisteth, and the forge
Where myriad angels, labouring for the blast
For ten long ages, in their sadness wept
For their sore travail; its uncooled result
For thee intended, and up hither brought
Ready for this occasion. Know, it now
Shall drink thy being, or with flaming wounds
Chase thee to heaven's gate, that, with thy grim howls
Paralysed, shall ope not; whilst, I turning thee,
Drive thee before me into Tartarus."
To which, thus Michael calmly answered:
"Think not to sway by threats, whom once by deeds
Hath proved superior: what to him thy vaunts
Of formidable weapon, or the name
Of thy ill mansion, who against thee comes
Strong in obedience and unfailing trust
In the Omnipotent: thou now art less
Able to cope with me than on that day,
When, with thy strength unminished, thou didst fail
Before thy legions with dissevered blade."
To which the infernal, bursting furious forth:
"Ah, wilt thou join him still, mean parasite!

To thine assistance? thou dishonest slave,—
For who can now believe thee of the gods,
Though with their brightness, and their stolen port!
But know, thou abjectest acknowledger,
That here I stand upon my own proud strength,
Unsapped as yet, unwasted, and defy
Thee, though thou bring here all heaven's mob,
And your great autocrat, the Thunderer,
Shall cheer thy failing courage with his bolts
Shot over thee his rampart, whom behind,
Offend he shall who is his equal yet."

So said, they each addressed themselves for fight,
With looks of wrath unspeakable, and high
Disdain co-equal, and with mighty strides
Came on each other, that the ground seemed trod
By three destructions, bent to make but one.
Soon ether blazed: soon each their uttermost
Of strength essayed; full soon performèd deeds
Too great for song. A novel struggle too:
They, upon him rain down afflictive strokes;
He, by vast chains secured unto himself,
Attempts to snare them, and to Erebus,
With desperate efforts, and prevalent might,
To drag them bound; nor had he failed, perchance,
To haul them through the infernal gates, and shew
Them to his peers,—so stout with rage, and what
Of original strength to overcome a foe,
Or plough the great abyss;—but, from on high

The almighty saw, all-ordering, and now
Intending honour his chief minister,
Prompted Ithuriel to suspend his aid.
This pleased, yet grieved, the fiend; believing fear
Influenced the ceasant angel, surer though
Thereby to capture his superior;
Whom, with redoubled efforts he attempts
To carry off, reckless of heavy strokes
Poured on his sheltering shield; great bulwark, that
Moved as he moved, enormous, on the wing,
Invulnerable. A wingèd world it seemed,
New-flighted from above, into the deep,
And knew not, hovering, where its orbit fix:
Hell's fire upon it burned, within reigned night;
And loud it roared beneath the falling war,
Filling with hoarse clangour the wide firmament.
But vain were his endeavours; for, even now,
Omnipotence descended to the scene,
And filled the arm of Michael with itself:
Sheer through the lifted adamant, and thickening casque,
His downward falchion split, and onward rove,
As one who cleaveth wood. Complete the rent
Of Satan; who, ingloriously disjoined,
Fled to cohere his parts.

Book Fifth.

Four times my lyre hath sounded to this theme,
And four times died its strains: if haply I
Equal unto my argument have been,
Happy indeed; and hopeful I resume
My exalted hymn; alacrous persevere,
Unstaying to enquire the verdict of the age —
If with authentic fire my bosom burned,
Or with false ardour. Let posterity
Decree (or this generation) whether I bore
The fire promethean, or a worthless flash,
Whose dull report I took for distant fame's.
Fame is a food that mortals may not taste;
It grows beyond the tomb; and there be fame
Of mighty failures, as of deeds achieved.
Who rivals fame of him who fell from heaven,
And from the towering of his high ambition
Sank into infamy beyond degree?
The stars shall fall from heaven, the deep grow dry,
The sun consumèd be with his own fires,
But song shall still endure: whilst thought shall be,

This faculty shall survive, whilst passion moves,
Or hearts are found sincere; whilst gratitude,
Whilst strong devotion lasts, or memory;
Whilst man is spiritual, God is good, or just.
From this I comfort draw, as one resolved,
Whose conscience late perplexed; or one who, long
In the dark valleys travelling, gains at length
The mountain tops, and, far above the mists,
Enjoys the shining day: and for my theme;
Though grim its aspect, and though fatal, yet,
The grandest scenery is ever sorrowful;
And pathos sadness better loves than joy:
For shadow is the interest of things;
And fear destroyed were to annihilate hope:
What were the welkin if it lacked the clouds?
Without the winter, what long summer days?
But spring not comes, nor summer of success,
Unto the lost; nor to their vanquished king.
He, fallen from day, and stamped a hopeless one,
Can never be restored; to him, no vernal tide
Of grace arriving, nor the twilight wan
Of distant good; but, an eternal night
Before him lowering, and the consciousness
Of an existence endless and undone.
Oh Muse severe, if one hot tear should fall
For his condition, tell me, were it sin?—
Or, if I see a frown within thine eye,
Tell me, oh, tell me, what him next befel.

Sat on a swarthy rock, far off the scene
Of struggle, that the conquerors soon repaired,
And then fled homewards, behind him rising high,
Gigantic bluff, he next appeared. But oh,
How changed! Upon his hand, no longer taught
To wield the weapons of tumultuous war,
His head he leaned: his eyes were on the ground.
At intervals, long intervals, he groaned;
Scarce groans, for such rife argument; but such
As, when they came, appeared those of a globe,
That eased its heart but once a century.
His shield upon his left was reared: his spear
Upon his right: his sword, unscabberded
And grim, at rest from waste. As some grand pile,
With fallen roof, and black abasèd walls,
Stands seething still, a monument of fire,
So he, distressed. Long thus he dwelt, nor saw
Beyond the region of his feet, and seemed
Within a solitary wilderness: but now,
A youthful troop of either sex approached;
Who, wrapped in their sweet converse, or disport,
Drew nigh unconsciously; and, soon at hand,
Gazing upon him, dread and singular,
Stood in mute wonder, till one of their group
Him thus addressed: "Who art thou, and from whence,
That thus, with tranced eye, emitst such sounds,
Sad looking, and no mate? Of similar
We never heard from aught of upright tread,

Nor yet of prone — save his, the huge and oozed
Hippopotame, who useth not such sound
From aught of pain, (as in thee seemeth it,)
But, from his feelings drowsy and plethored,
Blows o'er the night-hung banks. Speak, stranger here
Or not before beheld; what mean these sounds,
That seem in thee to enunciate distress?"
"Yet whence shall come distress?" a groan replied,
When thus another: "Art thou a native here,
Thine home till now the inviolable woods;
Or from some higher clime, some doubtful zone,
Dark, and yet dreadly light, where only dwell
Discordant demi-gods; thee thence feud-chased?"
And following him, a female's silvery tongue:
"Say, art thou weary, and with travel spent?
If so, arise, and follow us to couch.
Lo, in the wood, hard by, extends a form,
Enwrapped in moss and canoped with thick boughs;
Pray let us guide thee there, and from retirement
Send to thy senses slumber-bearing strains."
And now a male, with searching look, him thus
Interrogates: "Art thou a spirit of heaven?
Fellow of Michael and of Raphaël,
Who lead the choirs of strength and sweetness on?
Art thou from splendour inconceivable?—
Or from the twilight of the universe,
Its utmost bounds? Say, art thou blessed, or sad
As are thy looks, which might become the spirit

The whom, they say, is evermore in grief,
And for his treason locked in endless thrall?
Why art thou thus in shadowy aspect come,
And in repulsive guise, no needful mien;
For thou shouldst shame the spheres if unobscured,
Or the bright comet when he rounds the sun,
Didst thou exhibit all thy radiance:
Say, thou who must have voice articulate,
A tone beyond that common with the brute,
Say, we beseech thee, if of higher speech,
The reason of this visit." When thus the fiend,
Sententious: "I can speak your tongue. And that
Is heaven's." The prompt and warm reply, "Welcome
For that, although thou alien seemst; reveal,
Thou powerful vague, reveal thine history."
To which he, solemnly; "I would, if ye
Were strong, and could support to hear it; being
Not so, I 'm mute:" and having looked around,
With gaze to them interpretless, arose,
And, followed by the troop, who on the way
Discussed his form and novel implements,
Led to a limpid well; and, seating him
Upon its marge, signed that he wished to drink.
A virgin had a shell of radiant pearl,
And, pouring the bubbling wave into a cup,
Proffered the draught required; the which received,
He raised it to his lips, and unobserved
Breathed pride into its depths, and vanity,

Breathed high disdain contemptuous, and wild whims.
With doubt that disinvenerates, and spirit
Of disobedience, and a headstrong will.
Then, as himself remembering, from his own,
It bore due unto hers, who courteous would
Have sipped thereof, but that it effervesced,
And, running o'er, left the cup chrystalless.
But she not heeds the sign, and gives again;
And taking back the chalice thus began:
"Hierarch, for less than such I will not deem
Thee, though perplexed, and thou that look benign
Lackest, the seal of each empyreal prince;
What may we augur from thy tacitness?
Thy glorious peers, if thou be peer to them,
Communicate, nor cause us to repeat
Our prayer for knowledge; or, if too curious,
With rosy smile repress, and us divert
To golden fields of wisdom, and the rich
Repast, in dialogue contemplative
Of our exalted immortality;
That moments fly, and we unconscious still,
Wander in thought's etherial flighted steps
Half through the mazes of eternity,
And mark not time. With them comes wingèd joy,
As crowds around them gathering testify;
With thee, that which we should imagine, even
The dark and heavy vestiture of woe:
What may this mean, what from it we deduce?"

And no reply, a sister stellant thus:
"Thou art a giant, yet appearest sad;
Taller than Michael, or Jehonakim,
Heaven's mightiest ones.—But thou art scarce of heaven,
Nor yet of here, at least besides thee none
Were here e'er seen: no traveller tells of thee:
Our mothers, nor our fathers, e'er have spoken
Of such revealèd: the earth's sons, they say,
In stature have diminished, nor were ever ours;
And hell's as yet have not aspired thus high,—
Mayhap too near the watchful towers of heaven.
But wheresoever be thy place, it must
Be some vast seat, some great abode, though wide
And foreign far from this, or angel domes;
One where perhaps God delights his skill to reverse,
And passion puts in forms diverse from ours.
But I am weary of conjectures? Angel,
If not forbidden so to do, resolve:
Inform thy craves, where is thine home, say where
Abidest thou?" "In the deep shade," said Satan.
To whom the maiden: "Do ye love the shade,
(If ye be many,) prefer it to the luminous?
Or are ye thereunto condemned to go,
Or else to wander lonely for awhile
As thou art here, a transient for some fault;
Some sudden, hostile darkening of your fronts
'Gainst the great light above: where lies the shade
Thou speakest of?" The questioned answered not,

But seemèd into reverie relapsed;
When in this order different males demand;
"What means this marring streak, that scarce accords
With thy vague loveliness?" "If not too prying,
What means this fitful quivering of thy breast,—
And of thy countenance, disquieted?"
"Why dost thou bear these strange accoutrements?"
"That horrent thing which fits thy brow; of what
Significant?" "The universal bond,"
The fiend replied, in answer to the last:
"And that tall bole?" "Of rule." "And this bright round,
And smoking crookedness?" "The omniscient eye,
That all beholds; as you your forms in its
Circumference—eternity: this curve
Is time." Each on the other gazed, and then
Gazed all on the interpreter; who thus,
Revived, began: "Who will accompany me
Upon a voyage? Where sits the Eternal on
His mountain throne, far off shall he behold;
The angels, of whom I, and prime of that
Great bliss, for you forstalled: midst the far stars
We next shall ride, and all below survey;
Yourselves, and fallen earth; and, if disposed,
In her profoundure, hell: who volunteers?
Wilt thou?" This of that latter maiden asked,
And to a youth, her loved, the question he
Repeats, saying, "Wilt thou?" Even whilst he spake,
A mask deceptive had improved his face;

But which the searching lustre of that clime
Now penetrates, and all the king of grief,
And ire, and hellish gall grew manifest;
Which caused them to recoil unanimous,
More in abhorrence than in sudden fear,
And looking upwards they behold his name,
Satan, inscribed in air; and now retreat,
Leaving him sole possession of the fount.
Then comes his mood again; and, rising up,
Soon hopeless nigh he plies his heavy wing,
And, sluggish, toils along the orb-strewn way;
Gaining, and leaving suns. Like some swoln wave,
That swings its volume as from shore to shore,
Anon he rises, and anon he falls,
A devious flight; yet swerves to neither hand;
But perseveres in his dull voyage; still bears,—
Dispirited, and at all points o'erthrown,—
Onwards and on, incalculably swift,
Yet for his pinion slow. But think not, he
Who, like the prowling and opprobrious beast,
Here rifles oft the dove-cote's slumbering height;
Or he who, from the untaught jungle, comes
With matchless strength and mountain of his bulk,
To invade the Hindu's cultivated fields,
Has found an entrance to these noble realms,
His undertaking will relinquish thus:
So grand a prize demands his utmost strength,
Not yet brought forth. He, flying, thinks; and now,

Primed for a last attempt, the flood recourts;
And soon upon its banks refolds his wings.
Silent it rolled, and solitarily,
Between its firm and everlasting bounds;
Whence the wide landscape stretched its vasty breadth
In varying face of verdure and incline,
Rising on either hand, until at length
Its fainting verges seemèd entering heaven:
The sky was golden noon's scant-clouded; Zephyr
Slept; and o'er all reigned happiness and calm.
Here soon completeth he the needful change;
A stellant's frame assuming, young and fair;
Bright-locked, and welkin-eyed; whose nathless form
Surpassed Narcissus', or that Antinöus',
The Cæsar's pride; or Ganymede's, he who
Bore the cupped nectar to offended Jove,
When Hebe sighed, ebanished from his smile;
Not more seducing, Hebe's freshest self,
Glowing resplendent o'er the rosy wine.
Thus he disguised the demon in fair form,
And gliding down the stream, in light gondole,
Sat meretricious in the stern, like the unchaste,
Who seeks for traffic in the public way.
Few crafts had ta'en the tide, and stately down
He rode alone awhile; and, distant, seemed
Mayhap the haunting genius of the flood;
As proud he came, and unlaborious,
Progressing with a grace beyond the swan's,

No oars propelling with their measured sweeps,
Nor sail performing yoke unto the winds;
He current drawn. Though with no dolphin team,
Not lovelier Venus came, the when new-born
She, ferried by the foam, made Cythrea's isle;
Nor Neptune, though he sprang from loins divine,
Better became the rippling main. And now,
From out the banks 'gan steal the warrened skiffs,
Furtive and few, and few to more and more;
Augmenting still in numbers and in pride,
Till by degrees a wide flotilla light
Dropped with him gently down. When to his mouth
He put a double pipe, and blew such chords
As charmed the flowered deep, and chained the winds,
Thin prisoners; then slid to melody,
To plaintive air that, traversing the stream,
Wandered the melted banks like sensuous sprite;
Or song of some celestial minister,
Quiring concurrent with the laudant hour
Of the empyrean; strain that wooed the heart,
And, as at signal of an admiral,
In flanking lines, and at the distance best
For them devour the sound, arranged the fleet,
That, wrapped in more than famed Elysium,
Blessed the auspicious voyage: what could they less,
When he consents to play? what less than now
Transported be? for lo! a martial burst,
Followed by throes of joy, and giddy whirls,

And shoots extravagant, and snatches sweet,
Whose briefness tantalised; 'terspersed by chords,
And melancholy bars: great overture!
Whence, fresh as morn, arose a carol wild,
Like bird from lowly nest, and fitful as
The gust that wags the flowerets' heads, which grew
Through soft ascencions into gayer strains,
And these again to rampant jollity,
That jigged and capered to the very clime
Of sound's licentiousness; then calmly died,
In culmination poignant, and yet rich,
Of a supernal hymn. At length he ceased,
And, breaking up the lines, around him crowd
They numerous, and o'erwhelm with praise, and thanks
Overflowing; taken by his looks no less,
(As he who, simple, took the adder home,
Or smitten mariner might undertake
To row a treacherous siren to the land,)
Swift o'er the tide the fair gondola flies,
And mounts the shore, urged by delighted hands.
He disembarks, and with him all the throng:
Then to palmy grove, whose leaves debarred the heat,
And naked stems were portals to the breese,
Surrounding him they led, and therein took
Repast. On eminence he honoured sits;
Whom they, as honoured, serve; each longs to serve,
Where each partakes on equal terms simple
Provision — herbs, and the mellowed fruit, their fare.

And beverage of the grape pendant o'erhead,
Waiting expression to the upturned mouth;
Boundless abundance, and surpassing far
The steaming feasts of pampered luxury,
Though plainlier served; or heathen nectar perhaps,
Or food ambrosial, the cheer of gods,
Though borne on gold, or lucent diamond,
Or purer light. — For these so honourable,
And to magnificence and beauty used,
Angelic aspects, and a home upbuilt
Of noblest worlds, 'midst which the Almighty's feet
Wander well pleasèd, nor despiseth he
Virtue unmingled with idea of pomp;
Great in their unsophisticatedness feed:
Gourds were their flagons, and enamelled shells
Their salvers; the green turf their table, and
Their seats the feet of immemorial trees;
With concert in the boughs, and droning bees,
Laden with forage for their next refection,
Traversing their board. Love sweetened all still higher,
And health gave relish, whilst a grateful heart
Blessed Him all-giving. Halcyon the hour!
Peace clasped Enjoyment, and Enjoyment smiled
On Peace, and mighty Hope on both: heaven seemed
With earth commingling, or there seemed here
Earth's ancient Eden with unfallen race.
Of such, and so parta'en, their unearned meal
Despatched with greater haste, for that their ears

Still rang with glorious sounds; and now achieved
They urge reprisal of the haunting pipe.
Straight to his mouth he put it, and attuned
A warm thanksgiving to the Lord most high,
An air of heaven. Oer many a sunny vale,
And hill commanding half the realms of fire;
On blissful seas, and on immortal plains
Where dwell the sanctified, it oft had risen;
Rivers, and streams of life; and oft within
The palaces of angels; and at foot
(Whilst brightness hides the summit evermore,
And night perpetual makes with endless day,)
Of that pure mountain on the which dwells God,
Its numbers poured; whose burden these took up,
That swoln with replication of their throats
Rolled o'er the grove sublime: thrice went the round,
And thrice the charmed air bore it to the clouds,
Or swept afar; and, having ceasèd, one
Astonishèd, now eagerly inquired.
"Where gainedst thou that wondrous instrument,
And skill the not less wondrous, for such sounds
We never heard before, nor built up strains,
Though in these parts be numbers that excel?"
To whom the fiend: "Neither do come from far."
"Say then," the first pursued, "from whence, that we
May such obtain." "I know not whether ye dare,"
Was the reply: "Dare!" was responded straight,
"We dare do aught, save touch the denied tree."

"That I have touched," replied the venturous fiend:
Even as the gust throws back the leafy boughs,
This declaration caused them to recoil:
Horror betook each face, and all aghast,
Silent they stood; when thus resumed the fiend:
"Vex not yourselves; no harm hath yet accrued,
Nor apprehend of ill; an object am I not
Of pity, but of envy, as you see:
Haste ye the like possess." Sighs answered first,
And dropping tears, and groans; within their breasts
Ineffable distress, confusion, wild alarm;
Strange tenants these, and rùder by tenfold
From strangeness, and each face marred sorely: he
Expectant stands, as one who in some peril
Awaits the coming shock: they grieve, he smiles,
Patient: and now, recovered somewhat, one
Began: "Thy counsel will we not, though thou
Seem whole and fair, nay, wondrous beautiful,
Nor shrunk, nor blasted like the ripe fallen fruit,
The which hath suffered witless tread: Rash one!
Thou hast become sad criminal, first here
Hath done offence: a rebel thou hast grown,
Thy Maker's foe; surely some tempter's fool;
Satan hath hither been, and thee hath duped:
Say, hath not the Almighty yet unto thee spoke?
Have not his angels yet condemned thee?"
To which the fiend, composed; "Affright not thee,
Nor fill these with thy fears; the Almighty have

I seen, and with his angels spoke; all is,
And shall be well: the hazard was to the first
That dare appropriate; which being done,
'T is past. Hear now how it happened. Upon
A late fallen day, pressed by the sun, whose whole
Meridian shine had bathed my uncrowned head,
I sought the forest in the afternoon,
And there soon fell asleep—and sleeping dreamed,
Dreamed that at foot of a tabooèd tree,
Stood a fair-looking individual;
Who, with his left hand raised, pointing on high,
And right-depending (as if it sought from me,)
Oped with his looks insertive my sealed eyes:
At once, I thought I offered him my aid,
Who signed it thence, but signed that I should use:
The tree looked fair, and ruggedless its stem,
But at a height past my attainment seemed,
Propended, stunted, and anfractuous bough:
There 't was he pointed, and appeared to say,
Mount and acquire it; but, acquire 't thyself.
Instant I took the tree, whose conscious rind
Seemed heave me upwards to the noble theft,
But which despoiled brought swiftly to the ground:
At once, by intuance, I applied the tool,
And wrought this instrument bright-hued and straight;
Straight forced into it breath, when lo! outflew
Therefrom a harmony of eternal pent;
In me producing, who expected not,

Such fearful pleasure, terrible delight,
That my strained soul, like to a thirsty sail,
Shook nigh to tattering with the o'ermastering joy:
In joy I woke, and nigh me saw the tree;
Clambered its height, and did as I had dreamed;
Re-sufferèd the joy — methought indeed enhanced;
Nor since that day hath slackenèd my bliss."
He said, and for a moment none replied;
But now in broken tones one thus began:
"Sayest thou so! but in the wood, and grove,
And forest, and where'er the tree is found,
There hovereth his sign: he would not so
It guard, might theft meet with impunity."
And following this, another thus him warned:
"Do not anticipate reversion joys;
A fate like theirs who plucked the fruit and ate
May soon be thine — yea, one more terrible,
Who may not purchase with the loss of here,
A seat in heaven; nor win back innocence
By guilt vicarious borne; impendent death,
Mortality upon thee passed, from which to escape
Immortal, but to dwell with him in chains,
And howl thy future being in the ears
Of his bad angels, who, the first seduced;
Unvisited of light, and emptied of repose,
Darker thy soul beneath thy Maker's frown,
And racked with fell despair: cheat not thyself;
Vengeance but tarries, is not abrogate;

It will at last descend, and thou be lost,
If not devised a remedy." "Believe
Me, God I 've seen, nor hath he frowned, said Satan:
"Nor looked he distantly?" a third brake in;
"Ah who could bear to be estranged from him,
For all th' exchange of thy enrapturing pipe!
Hence, hence; we will not thee." And next one thus
Arraigned; "Thou art an ingrate child, to break
Our sire's sole law, his lonely ordinance—
Thy dream, a poor excuse: whence came, thou awake,
Thy dread temerity?" To whom the fiend:
"Good comes from good alone; thence, evil never;
Good only yieldeth good; and good for ever:
In heaven evil lurked coeval with our sire;
And, thence cast out, in forgèd chains of strength
Now howls in hell, with echoes reaching earth,
Which is its shore; and though its ocean rage,
Its angry billows may not reach us here."
"Fallacious confidence!" one answered quick;
"Thee hath it grasped already, and may suck
Soon into ruin irretrievable:
Haste, haste, fall down, whilst hap may grace be found
Whilst we here as one heart will intercede
For thee." But even then he 'gan his pipe
Retrill; when one now loud: "Wouldst thou enforce
Us to partake thy sin! thy ruin too—
For both are one: whate'er thou pleadst, howe'er
Congratulatest thyself, sad, fallen wretch;

Thy punishment, though slow, is sure to come;
Deep, deep art thou amerced." To whom the fiend,
Act suiting to the word:" If so, I bow;
I should indeed have cause to apprehend,
Had not our sire connivèd at my act,
And thus rewarded me:—But cease we this,
And, place of needless prayer, a melody."
When one indignantly him thus addressed:
"How darest thou persevere, fool-hardy wretch!
How darest thou send up thanks, offender thou;
With that same thing which, though it seem thee charm,
Must charm thee into wrath: cease to insult
The majesty we love." "Ye love not more
Than I, who perfect love:" replied the fiend:
"For love that 's perfect casteth out all fear:
Fear bringeth torment; torment is of sin:
The first a stranger, argues strange the last:
I have obtained this pipe, and with it I
Him praise: he censures not; but more, admires
The deed: why then should you, ye audience changed?
Tell me the worth of that obedience,
That dare not other!" And one thus rejoined:
"Oh, sophist vain, and desperate justifier,
How dost thou wound thyself with thine own balm!
How dost thou thrive in justice' interval!
Thy first temerity, unvisited,
Becomes heroic, to such rapid pitch
Audacious rising, with a grandeur false

Surpassing angels', for they scarce would dare
To make a virtue of their hideous crime;
So much thou them transcendest, touching thine,
Who of confession seemeth not to dream,
Glorying in that which should thee terrify
And cloud with shame: away, impenitent soul:
Thy words obtain not credence." Lifts his brow,
As if amazed, the tempter, and essayed
To speak; when thus another him forestalled;
"Contritionless, and self-deceived! — for so
Indeed thou must," — he cried aloud; "what is
Thy word 'gainst his; depraved by one offence,
Thou mayst another hazard, and the truth,
Like to his reservation, set at nought:
Seal in deep shame thy lips." To whom the fiend;
"Why so? shame cometh but of wrong; and wrong
Being not, wrong's consequence is not: my words
Obtain not credence! what interest have I,
To you dissimulate? — nay, rather, what
Disservice have I done myself with you,
What topmost pinnacle of height foregone,
By openness — and wherefore not? Otherwise,
Where were the harmony with the Almighty's ways?
See the wide heavens of blue; nought from you hid:
Observe the clouds, as over you they sail;
Do they their secrets keep? or, scorning such,
Down pour them on your heads: why then should I
Deny unto you mine! Behold the stream,

Its amplitude of bay, — all yours: why then
Not all the woods? You 'll say, 't is his command.
Tush! tush! a foolish legend only sways,
A superstition stays your nimble hands —
The sign is nothing supernatural:
Soon as I lessed the tree of this, it waned —
Less cause, gave less effect: some emanation,
Escaped, burns over it: this was best proof —
Besides, who here extant heard given this canon?
How many lips to yours hath it passed through?"
"Oh, swift depravity! ingenious fraud!
How fast thou travellest from ill to worse!
But thinkst thou us of this persuade?—have we
Not seen the zebra, and the tall giraffe,
Nay the behemoth, and huge elephant,
Stand fixed and mute, with reverence-fillèd eyes,
Nor dare against its sacred rind to rub
Their itching coats? Are these the legend's slaves?
These, superstitious? Hast thou observed the rook
Build there its blackening nest? or known the hawk
Drop there a stone to breed a parasite? No!
Not thou, nor we, nor the sun's matchless eye,
Nor the resplendent moon, nor all the stars,
That through the darker portions of the month
Watch like ten thousand spies." So, passionately,
One answered him; to whom, dispassionate,
And with bad aptitude, he thus rejoined:
"Wouldst thou, intelligent, defer to brutes!

Ask of thyself this question, reasoner:
Why should our Maker institute a test,
Knowing our hearts from out eternity?"
To whom the other: "We will not ask ourselves;
We will not dare to arraign our Maker's ways:
Wherein our reason cannot answer us,
We mock it not with queries; but with awe,
And resolution to obey, receive
His mystic ordinance; nor doubt his wisdom
Who hath one interdiction thus upraised,
Save which, upyielding nature's boundless sum:
Ungrateful wretch! hence, ere we drive thee forth."
To which thus Satan: "Wrongly ye accuse,
Injurious are become, and not perceive
Your own ingratitude, that vice of fiends:
Who will hereafter shew you any good?"
"Callst thou that good, thy disobedience,
Thy Maker's word and sign to have contemned?"
Exclaimed one: "begone, ere we believe
Thee the arch-fiend himself." "Such thanks are mine,
Who late delighted you," responds the fiend:
"Whom late adored, behold now loathed and scorned;—
Alack! how falsely do ye estimate
Yourselves, and crush the creature whom ye deem
Undone: me fallen you suppose, and shew
No kind consideration of my plight,
But strive to wound me with malicious words,
And chase me alien; your virtue's height!

Yet, though provoked, shall no affront me cause
To lose my meekness and unboasted love;
A love, and undissembling charity,
That not imagined to conceal from you
The source of gift, of high prerogative;
Admired indeed, but little understood—
Now impious deemed; so little do we know
How to appreciate, at first, high things;
Too high, it seems, for valuation here,
Or your acceptance—if, indeed not scorn
Hinder the latter of a gift so mean.—
Scorn, sinful sentiment! and kin to pride
That threw down angels from their high estate,
And here may enter: then, were ye undone,
And fallen lower than the earth's frail tribe
As much as now transcending; in the gulf
Beneath, your habitation fixed ever;
Hopeless, forestalled in one great sacrifice
The hope of sinners: Oh, relent, upon
Yourselves have pity, and your offspring dear;
Disdain not me, who thus unto you preach
The law's repealment; ye, who have clearly proved
(If proof were needful to omniscience,)
A law were needless where so long 't is kept,
Faithful in abstinence, differing from earth,
Who came, perceived, and undemurring, ate."
He said, but none replied; or whether posed,
Or sickened, with his fallacies, or both;

And from his pipe, in notes august he breathed
Immense temptation; as if hundred throats
Of voicing angels were preambling
To the full peal of meditated hymn —
When they forbade; and prostrate at his feet,
A stellant fair, impassionèd began:
" Oh stranger, ruined, yet surpassing fair, —
Fairer than all the children of the stars,
Young cherub guised, and stripling angel seeming
Incarnated; as though thy fault must shew
Tenfold more heinous by such front opposed;
And, tuned like seraph as thou art, not more
By that stolen instrument than thy own soft lip,
Depart this place: why shouldst thou persevere
To afflict our eyes, and thus to grieve our hearts?
For witness heaven, — (whom yet for thee we 'll seek,)
But that thy crime disqualifies thee there,
How much we should thee love." To whom the fiend:
" Arise, fair Queen, and come along with me,
Fairer than all the star-born daughters thou:
We will unto the woods, whose star-like shade
Shall welcome us unto hymeneal joys:
We 'll here desert, and watch the symbol fires
Wane one by one, as from the solemn trunks
We take the music, that, from day to day
Shall sustain rapture, and along our nights
Pour endless sweetness, that our life shall be
A rival anthem to the choir of heaven.

Arise, my bliss, and heaven of my eyes;
Arise, my star, and come along with me;
We 'll to the woods, companions evermore,
There take delight and great beatitude;
Come to the forest's wide secluded bower,
Nature's preparing, and the future home
Of thee, my 'spousèd one; come, linger not;
Mourn not for me, nor friends, nor rifled woods;
Love burns, and longs to catch thee in its fires: —
What all this open, to the coverture?
What vulgar days, compared with life divine?
Hasten to exile, and awaiting wings;
Haste to the twilight of our banishment;
Angels shall be our 'spousal messengers;
There will I live, and love with thee alone."
He said, impetuous, and upon her looked
A fire-eyed ravishment; devoted seemed
Towards her with all his being — but even now
Two males advancèd swift to rescue her,
And violence seemed following hard on sin;
For as some beast at length, being driven to bay,
Stern on its hunters turns its forkèd head,
So, faced with look of wrathful pride, the fiend,
And them withstood; whilst one him thus addressed:
"Ah sad effects of sin! full proof thou now
Givest of transgression, and the fearful change
In thee wrought by it: away, persist not thus
To obstruct." Wrath swelled the fiend; who nevertheless

Replied: "Ah sad effects of sin! full proof!—
What proof give ye, who serve yourselves of strength
To rob, and wrong tyrannically the weak—
She, powerful but in beauty, on you lost:
'T is you shew sad effects, not I; shew your
Decadency; go cut ye each a bough."
"Recriminate not thus!" one answerèd,
"But yield thy prisoner; 't is not from thee
We bear her, but from sin." The fiend loud laughed
But rage was at his heart, instead of mirth;
Nor means he to resign her whom he held:
Firmly he grasps her—yet, he grasps her not,
His palm too huge becomes for such small prey:
All seems, to him, descending—but, to them,
His head he carries now amidst the sky,
And unplumed wings enormous, at his back,
Huge as hell's gates, behold they, and confessed,
The dark arch-angel vast now stands upreared,
And hides from them the sun; and now uprisen,
Like to a whirlwind, soon is seen no more.—
Thence fled, he onwards beat the fields of light
Cursing; and with hoarse maledictions sped,
Even to the exeunt ports, which, rushing through,
He longed to overthrow. The dimming void
Receives him next, and oer-against him night;
Yet ere to perfect darkness he arrived,
Turned, he thus spake: "Curse ye, ye gates of light
Ye studding suns, receive tenfold my curse:

F'all, ye insulting fires, ye golden plains:
Be all your hills consumed with inward heat;
And let thy floods, upswollen, extinguish thee,
Opprobrious torch! deceptive hold of day!
Thou yet shalt dim; thou lustrous deceit!
Darkness shall yet be thine: from hell, or earth,
Or evil-hoarding space, ill shall befal thy souls:
Sorrow and fright they 've known, and shall know more;
Know more of that which makes me that I am."
He said, and winged his flight far towards the north,
Beyond the bear, and where the telescope,
Below the horizon's bounds ne'er profited.
There, in deep dusk he flew; and on, and on,
Midst realms obscure and well nigh starless tracks
Silent pursued; and came at length where Night,
Shaken from her plumage all the star-eyed days,
Spreads unadorned her wings. Into her breast
He plunged; and through her womb floats like a shark
Upon the unmooned sea — eschewing thought;
Nor knoweth, nor careth, where his dark flight leads,
So that it leads unto forgetfulness.
But vainly for oblivion he strives,
Vain strives appease the rising memories —
To vanquish misery by not battling her;
Dark clouds of horror rise within his soul,
Despair, and all the wretchedness of hell:
For hell was in him, and, the hell besides,
Of all the recent; shame immeasurable,

And disappointment, and anxiety,
And impotence proved — in one sentence brief;
That keenest anguish of his haughty soul,
His pride's defeat, and malice foiled. — Thus he,
For many an hour, alternately from thought
Striving him sever, or, pondering what tale
Shall serve him with his comrades in the deep,
Nor noting time, nor space, holds on his way;
And terrible to meet him it had been;
More terrible than mortal meeting hound,
Rabid, and foaming venom, or the tusked boar,
Or wounded lion, on its homeward path;
Or the bright avalanche, or earthquake dire,
Or the volcano's flame; dread foes all these,
But with the fiend compared, as on he rode,
As health compared with the pestilence:
Thus he for many an hour his flight pursued;
Until a strange defaillance took his wings,
And novel weariness; when woke he up
As if from torpor, and their vastness shook,
Dispersing thunder through the lone abyss. —
But wearier, and wearier he grew,
And felt his pinions stiffen on their hinge,
As ancient doors that long have been unused;
And in his soul a dread suspicion woke,
And he had turned, but felt compelled pursue:
Yet he 'midst all, himself intact conserved,
Nor let a sound of fearfulness escape;

But as a criminal, to the gallows borne,
With dogged silence would half cheat the law,
So he endured the Almighty's awful hand,
That drove him onwards till his vigour failed;
When, as a beast to slaughter overdriven,
Exhausted falls, so he, within the void,
And spreads his wings to check the swift descent;
Yet faster falls, and now, round spins; now scarce
Retains his senses, rotating amain;
Now, scarce his upright doth he keep, and now,
Ignobly tumbleth he, head over heels,
Like to a mountain hurlèd from the moon,
Senseless, cycloiding, till a planet stays.

Book Sixth.

THUS have we seen the Potentate of air
Falling; an earnest, mayhap, of the day
When all his power shall fall: when every heart
Shall be renewed in righteousness and peace;
And Nature, donning her primeval bloom,
Smile all the lovelier for her recent tears.
New heavens, new earth, the Scriptures say, shall be;
New hearts, and right affections — in one word,
With Eden spread on every continent,
The earth surpass her fabled golden age.
Oh, to have lived in that primeval hour
When sang Morn's stars together! earliest man:
But, in the middle period we stand,
Amongst the algæ and the teeming ooze
Left by the deluge of degeneracy —
Between creation's fast receding shore,
And the bright mountains of the future world.
So still the future breaks upon man's view,
As, sailing o'er duration's endless flood,
New generations rise. The sons of God

Unequal loved the daughters fair of men,
And giants therefrom sprang; a hybrid crew;
Whom, impotent for good, the waters drowned:
Again, the first, in spiritual union
With human souls, enormous vices get;
Which vengeful fire from heaven shall consume,
—Gracious descending to the human race,—
And the dread heat of knowledge; and the glare
Of rising virtues shall, like reptiles that
Flee at the light, nor whilst it stays return,
Forbid to curse again the purgèd globe.
For love is all, and shall be all *in all*,
And goodness infinite: the clouds shall break,
The heavens shall smile in blue, warm into gold,
Yea, burst to purple's grand imperial dye—
Time's gorgeous evening overspreading all:
The earth shall heaven approach; the heavens yearn
Towards her, as dam towards lamb without the fold;
No more divided, they shall melt together;
And through eternity, still fraught with change;
Heaven, earth, the star-built universe be one.
But how shall I relate, unaided; sing,
Untaught; his hap, who fain would this frustrate!
Tell me, oh Muse, who last of thee enquire;
Tell me, Urania, thou, for well thou knowst,
Who holdst the undivided lyric reign;
Nor three, nor nine, as thee of ancient feigned;
But one benignant and etherial Power,

Who lookst from topmost heaven to deepest hell,
And o'er the dusky boundaries of the world,
Into the further undisturbèd gloom;
Impalpable to mortal ken, free yet
From mortal song, tell me, kind sovereign Queen,
Star-Lady clear! the further of the fiend.

Deep in the sheets of circumscribing snows
Found he himself, when to himself he came;
To consciousness returning, but to find
Himself in custody of ponderous ice,
And chainèd to the centre of the orb—
As if to mock him, who of all his strength
Abstracted, lay, tortured with hideous pains,
Helpless, forlorn; his tongue refusing words;
His bosom, groans; his eyes alone being free,
And which he rolled from side to side, and up
Into the blue, and found no ease. How should!
His soul endures supernal wrath tenfold!
And who shall that describe? It may the Muse
In vain essay to do: yet, may she sing,
Humbly, what heaven beheld; and how that hell
Flashed from her distant and insensate womb
Fiercer her fires; nor did it displease the Highest,—
Impassive though,—on this occasion shew
Upon his holy hill; whence thunder rolled,
And smoke, and gathering gloom, that on the ends
Of heaven brought twilight down ere noon; eclipse,

Awful and solemn, of the living beam ;
That o'er the region of the beatified
Mute silence reigned, and expectation dumb ;
Earths, cherubs, thrones, dominions, hierarchs
Prostrated prone ; until the peals, so late
Resounding over the empyrean world,
Soothful subsiding, now, unbroken yield
The sacred stillness to these words of God :
"Behold, my first-born sons ; and ye by grace
Redeemed ! " and straight with sounds symphonious,
And solemn choristry, heaven's floor disappeared,
Shewing a wide, and Stygian, starless deep ;
Down which they gazed in vain, until therein,
Their eyes to blackness used, appeared bright spot,
And the arch-demon on it miniatured ;
Stretched on the waste like bound Prometheus :
When thus the voice celestial resumed :
"Behold the one my wrath from here cast out,
Behold his anguish, and behold his shame ;
Behold him chained : he from his depth hath risen
Thus high, and sought to harm our works ; nor less
A ruin make, throughout the numerous worlds
Our hand hath strewn wide of that penal star,
Than that once left him to achieve on earth :
But they have baffled him ; his blasphemies,
And wild audacity, his lying boasts—
Words not to be reiterated here ;
And now shall have, who have by faith so done,

A greater blessing from this foiled attempt;
His hate, which I do make my minister,
My glory working and their greater good."
So said, the awful voice of our great Sire
Surceasèd, and again the thunder spake
Celestial, and with widening echoes filled
Heaven's brightening space. Her late dissolvèd floor,
With gorgeous prelude of new majesty,
Tide-like from out the drear abyss arose;
And rose the host, like stars from out the sea;
Dominions, thrones, and principalities;
Archangels, virtues, powers, and fires serene;
Perpetual lights; thick constellations, ranks,
Crowds, galaxies; and orbs distinguished as
The burning vesper standing in Eve's porch,
And hymnèd thus exultant towards the throned:
"Glory, great glory unto thee, our King;
Honour and blessing unto thee, our Maker;
Thou hast us ever kept, and wilt us keep
For ever, but hast hence driven out the foe,
Thine adversary, and wilt still keep down.
Honour and blessing unto thee, our Maker,
Glory, great glory unto thee, our King.
Holy, holy, holy Lord God of sabaoth;
Wonderful, gracious, terrible, serene;
Omnipotent, omniscient, and true;
Light of thy kingdoms, darkness, loneliness;
Cherisher of us and all thy universe;

Ocean of life, and vague abyss of death,
Father and Comforter; who draweth praise
From out the wicked, and the mouth of hell;
Hosanna! hosanna! hosanna! to our God.
Incomprehensible, although revealed,
Beyond our understanding, and the flight
Of our imaginations, when they soar
From height to height, and lose themselves ambitious.
Veilèd thou sitst within thy sanctuary,
In fellowship of thyself, and dazzlest us
Who from afar in vain essay to bear
Thy feeblest ray; yet, in thy Son thee see:
Hail, Father, Son, and Spirit; hail, great Three-one;
Your anger is dismissèd, and your brows unclad:
Hail, all ye great Eternals, and accept
Our hymn; ye, ere was the beginning, dwelt
For ever blest;—when wert thou not, O Father;
When wert thou not, O Son; O Spirit, when
Not thou? Ye have been still for ever, and
For ever shall; still great in might essential, still
In glory great; your goodness who shall tell!
Hail, thou our great Creator, hail, Anointed One;
Hail, Dove, and take our breast." So they in heaven,
With countless multitude and echoes wide,
Reverberating o'er her vales and hills;
On which new glory rose, and virgin morn;
So they in heaven, where we would linger fain,
But that beneath demands, in sudden haste:

For lo! even now comes Moloch, driving on
Athwart the dark, like an advancing storm:
Fear goes before him, horror hangs behind;
And oft he spies through all the rounding night,
To find a beam. Three days he has ranged the gloom,
And now descries pale stars. Therewards he hies,
Rushing, and soon, amidst them come, round each
In mighty orbits wheels his circling flight,
As some vast ocean fowl round rocky isles
Might wing, thoughtful on which to build her nest;
And sees ere long on one his master laid.
Towards him he urges, and, astonished,
Hovering, full soon beholds his captive plight;
And now, loud voiced, thus shouts his great amaze.
"King! prime of heaven, without whom hell is not;
Her absent Lord! what chance hath laid thee there?
Hast thou encountered sheer the thunderer's Son?
Or hath a legion hurled — or heat endured
So long, invites to wrap in cold?" he cried:
Then, slow descending, over him exclaimed;
"Cursed be the hand whose power effected this!
The deed accursed that thus degraded thee. —
Wert thou beset, great king, and I not there
To aid! heaven curb thy joys; revenge, revenge,
Uprising from the deep, pours all her tribes
Insurgent o'er thy walls: hell's horror heaves,
And longs to gather thee amongst her spoils;
Thou art with us, or we with thee anon.

See there the hideous cicatrice, his front
New parted with the rending thunderbolt,
For what else could, that 's less than that dread arm?
Behold those bonds — but ah, why are they there?
Awake, destroyer, if not thyself destroyed,
Awake, great slumberer, 'wake, and with thy breath
Melt these opprobriums! — Dost thou then not
Regard? — art thou enwrapped in thine own thoughts?
Where is thy finer part, if not annulled?
Thou slumberest not — not as thy wont in hell;
Nor as upon the earth, when by thy side
Thy travel's mate I 've lain; nor as in heaven,
Where sleep appeared but sobered loveliness.—
Perchance thy foe, weary of thine unrest,
To ease himself hath parted thought and thee.—
Art thou no more? hath matchless excellence
Changed to a memory? then fail I too;
I would not thee survive, though to exist
Were to dethrone our hate: what were his throne
Not sat upon by thee! But 't is not so,
No, no, thou sleepst; thou yet shalt hear my voice;
Great emperor, prescriptive rule, virtue,—
If virtue 's in thee still,—know Moloch cries;
Hell's absolute, heroic god, give ear;
Let me not idly peal my message forth;
Thou art deposèd, thine authority contemned,
Hell scorns thy rulership, and dreams of heaven's;
She hath aroused her wild democracy;

Arise, be swift, or thou 'rt no more a king."
Even as a torpid breaks a season's ice,
So Satan his at this, with sharp report,
And smoke that with him soared; then downward plunged
Moloch him close pursued, and soon the deep
Roared, and grew luminous with their dread speed.
As two fierce comets, racing o'er the sky,
Seek the dark confines of the universe
So these, the coasts of hell — they fly, they burn,
And to their old, add new velocities,
And still plough down the bowels of the deep,
Loud as a storm, and all disorderèd;
Their arms astray, and unbound upward hair
Streaming like beams of fire about their frames:
Frightful descent, headlong, and horrible!
Eleven hours they scared the void, and with the twelfth
Descried their home, like the red evening clouds
Barring the midnight gloom: a welcome sight;
But that more welcome which they now perceive,
Token of night in the outpouring flames,—
Hell at that season only accessible,—
And soon the amazed guard, that there kept watch,
Rangèd like constellation round expiring sun,
Behold, on whom having come all flaming, sudden
They smite them to the deep ten thousand fathoms;
Then thread the fiery gorge, and hold their way
O'er the interior, and deem the deed
Most formidable done; a fond idea!

Them, warning cries from the recovered guard
O'ertook pursuing; straight answerèd by cries
Of warning from within; and beacon-fires,—
No tedious task to light in that hot realm,—
'Midst which they volleying go, till from the gloom,
Like pale clouds issuing, they see advance
The proud rebellion: when they alight,
Folding the burning portals of their wings,
And in a vale, where vales were numerous,
From flinty ridge, and scoriæ-wrapped spur,
Await the onset of a wan brigade;
Who, like a fleet riding a phantom gale,
Loomed in the murk, and whom now on them come,
Satan, in feigning accents, thus addressed:
"Band of the night, celestial harbingers;
Wherefore is this I see? what meaneth this
Strange shew of loyalty unseasonable;
Ye, whose repose is never here too long?
Return unto your lairs, I you remit
Your duteous homage, marshalling me towards home:
Return, and let to-morrow speak of love
Or duty owned." He said, but they advanced,
And he loud cried; "What! forwards though I ban!
Slaves, yield a way; think ye I not ye know,
Ye and your deeds?" Then as two clouds within
Some hilly region for awhile involved,
At last ride forth upon a current wind,
The two retreat upon resumèd wing;

But, soon re-alighted by a Stygian wood,
Unto his compèer thus the archfiend spake:
"Oh for the aid of Belial's arm, and good
Beelzebub's, and all our hierarchs!
Had I but these, and to them added one
Fair legion true of humbler cherubim,
I 'd teach all else how bitter 't were rebel.
But wherefore stand we thus, with all hell on
The move? is there no route, to these unknown,
Where we may covered wind, and so attain
In secresy our throne?" "I know of none,"
The morose chief replied; "I know of none,
Save scattering the crew." Satan made no
Reply to this; but they in haste debate,
Touching the fitness of fair promises;
Of stratagem; and metamorphosis;
And all the magic light-clad spirits own;
But, these declining as derogatory,
Over the wood they shot, and made their way
To distant rising ground; whence hove the host
In sight; illuminous, and greatly swoln;
Appearing foremost of a world of clouds;
And whom, being come within the monarch's hail,
He thus addressed. "Stay, ye mistaken ones,
And, taught your duty, go, and practise it:
Believe my words, for fate is not more fixed:
Once, by the oppressor's will, so goes the myth:
Since, by your own unanimous consent

Chosen, and in my prior sway confirmed,
With broader and more absolute control,
Even the universal government,
By public vote in all your orders given,
Secure I stand; and to my right divine,
Add other title, silencing all doubt,
Your own agreement, and retrieveless oath,
And claim obedience; nor do regard
What change of mind in you may have performed,
Since change of purpose in myself is not.—
What though, uprisen, and with proud numbers come,
By traitors movèd to rebellion,
And cowards, that for some small loss of pain,
Would barter all their noble enmity
Towards him above, who by his oath is bound
Your foe perpetual; shall I, your friend,
Whose glory is with yours for ever one,
And in hostilities am endless joined
'Gainst him, along with yon hell's commoners,
Forget myself? To give command is mine;
Yours, is obedience! mine, issue fiats is;
In execution, yours to honour them;
Of both, the duty without intermission,
To war for empire with unrighteous heaven,
And 'gainst her swell the frontiers of our hell.
This have I practised since the sword was drawn,
Since the fond tyrant caused civil strife;
But you, ye cravens!—for so they me inform,—

Intend submission, and by one base deed
T' o'erthrow the work of these laborious years!—
Then let your tide of opposition ebb,
I in its oozy bed alone will stand,
Unvanquished: hell cannot terrify me,
Nor rigour change! Though ye be recreant all,
And honour here forget herself to shame,
Upright I stand among the prone and base,
Nor mean to stoop; divide, that I proceed."
But clamour him forbade, and foiled he stood;
When rose a sound from the ulterior host,—
First, slight as that which ocean shells produce
When held unto the ear, nor it unlike,
And which now louder grew, and harshly swelled,
Two noble forms soon gleaming in the air,
And whom, now alighted, Satan thus accosts
In movèd strain, "Welcome Beelzebub!
Though in adversity we each be found,
And 'midst ingratitude—oh Belial,
Now is the time for thee to shew thy nerve."
Then to the first re-addressing himself; "Sweet friend,
Whom hell for certain loves, if love she aught,
And for that love may feel disposed to obey;
Speak these rebellious." That spirit waved
His hand, that seemed a fan of flame, and thus,
With mien superior, his unlost gift,
To address the crowd immediately began.
"Heaven's sons were once, now hell's, why will ye thus

Persist to your own hurt? why thus enforce
The mad resolution of the other day:
Believe me, who myself a subject am,
It boots you not:—though Satan fall, will he,
Jehovah, therefore you exalt? No, though
All hell should throng his gates with strong petitions,
And shake his throne with groans: sighs cannot bear
Away his wrath, nor tears his memory
Wash of your sins. Then, wherefore towards *him* change,
Since he towards *you* shall be unchangeable?
Ye say, "Desisting, he too will desist."
Believe it not: he, in exorbitant
And jealous mood, declared the loss should be
Eternal, unto those who scorned his Son:—
'These fires, no more allowed to cause blaspheme,'
'T is said, 'will die.' Fallacious hope!
The stern compulsion that remands you here,
Relax, and into freedom change at last!
So be it: and where will you betake you to,
The when unhoused upon the hungry deep?
Will ye upbuild within it? will ye lay
Rest for your weariness, breadth for your delight,
Upon the treacherous darkness? will ye call
Fire to your comfort, light to your command?
Foes of the Stygian; or shall you, freezing,
Eye from afar the genial atmospheres
That the wide world contains, but not for you,
Dismal, proscribèd, refugeless, unowned.—

This hell were preferable, yea all her pain
To such a consummation! horrid blank
And living death of being. Yet, to such
It must arrive, if not to worse, if here
We lose: beware, beware of rashness; banned,
Make further conquest under penalty
Of reimprisonment; spent, oh horror! think,
To fleet for ever down the abyss unrealmed:
Think of the pangs of fruitless penitence:
The finished treason towards an unmatched king:
He for himself disdains to plead; I not,
Who was not born like him to be supreme.
Whom should ye choose should he himself withdraw?
What hath he done, expulsion meriteth?
Hath he not braved for you the foe of late?
Stood 'twixt you and his shafts? hath he been slack,
No dart immediate to convey your ire?
Of all our name, who will himself expose
Like *him*, a mark for vengeance due to all?
Who, unto rule experienced, him succeed?
For credence give, nor I, nor these, nor all
The powers among, will you subserve; assist
To hold your state from crumbling into nought,
And making hell twice hell: where is the bliss
Of sheerest anarchy? what boon is there
In adding lesser to our greater wrong?
Who holds the balance now of equal right?
Who weakness makes a match for him, most strong?

Draws order, beauty, and a commonwealth,
From your chaos? Satan, he, Lucifer,
Who drew you first from monstrous rule; from gulfs
Of sycophance, and gave you to sit whole,
One broad autocracy! Therefore, give heed;
Refrain, or ere too late; ere shame you crown:
Forgiveness now awaits you, and oblivion:
Withdraw, retire, each to his resting place,
Retire from this, and ponder on your sin,
Your deep ingratitude; retire, I say,
Till morning breaks, and with it all things new."
So spake he, but the array advanced, and fled
The four: as might four lions scour the plain,
Before a troop of bounding Hottentots,
They fled, whilst hell pursued; inglorious,
Athwart the dark, inextricable night,
Sped towards the infernal gates. But long the route,—
Though made so briefly by the two that night,—
And horror strewn. O'er shingles oft they waved,
Once there a fiery beach; o'er actual seas
Of flame: through darkness, ghastly light; 'midst rain,
And hurricane; 'neath frigid, torrid skies;
O'er bare and desolate valleys, and o'er hills
Shaggy with misty horror; precipice,
And yawns; ravines, and gorges grim, and falls
Of thundering billows, that discharge themselves
Into deep dismal waters: over these,
And fœtid lakes, they sped, cruel reservoirs,
Dreary dominions, scopes lugubrious,

Realms desolate, and continents where grief
Sits like a thousand black and saddened kings:
O'er deserts, ice-lands, countries lorn; oceans,
And seas of death, and mortal isles; dark bays,
And continents, and worlds of gloom; huge zones
Of shadow, and uncertain fields, that hold
Regions, and dens, pits, quagmires, endless thaw,
Snares, gins, and scorpions, and monsters dire,
Infernal shapes, and dimly sailing forms
Wandering at large, save on this signal night;
Parts ever worsening, ever eviler growing,
Evil within evil, as sphere in sphere;
The land of terrors, and the grave of hope.
O'er these they fly, in wretched case forlorn;
Each one in sorest humour, but by far
Moloch the worst, and who now furiate cried;
"I flee no further, let all hell come on,
As come they do, and carry me without."
And round he wheeled, facing the imminent foe:
When Satan thus,—sad music in his voice;
"Knowest thou yon mount, invisible, yet high,
The throne of these black confines, lofty seat;
Whence oft I 've watched the birth of bleeding morn,
And borne the fiery tempest of the day,
Vainly endeavouring to pierce the gulfs
That lie beneath, and chequer the expanse
With their sight-scorning, secret-hiding glooms?
There will we halt, and try once more on these
Our influence." So said, the stayed wings wrought,

Through horror, and o'er horror, bearing them
On to the broad-topped promontory's brow.
Thence, looking backwards, they beheld the host,
Multitudinous, and stretching past the view,
Far into hell. Even as the gilded main,
Beneath the farewell of the setting sun,
Appears the passage to another world;
So seemed its mighty lapse the glimmering way
Into some land unknown. Onwards it came,
Frightful, and huge like a pale Phlegethon,
In breadth immense, and with enormous roar;
O'er which, now raised, thus Satan's voice resounds:
"Hang there upon your vans, ye audience vast,
And listen, whilst I speak to you once more:
Either a possibility ye seek,
Or fight 'gainst fate. That 't is the latter is
Beyond all controversy, past all doubt;
It is irrefragable we 're bound this,
Nor can the weakest be in permanence
Expelled. As well might ye endeavour yon
Oped gates to shut, or open those above,
As think succeed in this wild enterprise:
If ye can conquer heaven, or from their wish
Divert the sinews of his arm, proceed:
Close the wide doors that none may enter more,
Or range you thick above the circling fire,
Keeping night-scorching watch; or plant yourselves
Without; do this, and you have broken the charm;

Your wills, proved mightier than his. But do
It well, and be it wisely done ; bring forth
Your dominants, your lords of all degrees ;
Bring forth yourselves, hurl *ye* into the abyss,
Swearing that ye no more will enter here.
Are you prepared for this ? to wing your way
On high,— for what remaineth else ? — to scoff
At meeting bolts as pleasantries, soar 'gainst
The rending war, to drive his light-armeds back,
And backing hosts, although at vantage placed
To us who bring the contest from beneath ;
And through the chequery war-path of the stars,
Regain, and hold our seat? If so, urge on ;
But if not so, desist ; desist in time,
Ere you your shame complete." He said, and straight
From the array, as from a silver cloud
A herald angel might address the earth,
Him spirit tall and fierce : "Shame, shame, sayst thou,"
He cried, "who carest not for our shame, and preachst
Of ingratitude ! where was thine ear when first,
In peaceful climes, thy conscience, thunder-tongued,
Sounded thy coming shame ? where was thy tongue
That then was dumb on such a theme to ours,
Yet now so glibly trills ? We 're bound to this ?
Who knows it not through thee, on whom be hell's hot
curse !
Didst thou enforce this force-invested truth,
When at thy call thy creatures gathered last ?

Didst thou not it deride, and shake thy chains,
Vaunting them snap at will? Didst thou not say,
Create? Ha, ha, we have thee there; traitors
Amongst the Gods! ye little fires move on."
They moved, and moved was Moloch from his most
Profound, and them defied across: the three,
In haughty silence, stood confronting: close
The foe approached, inexorable; and now,
Upon them press; who, like four icebergs tall,
At midnight stricken on the polar sea,
By floating pack-ice in extensive field,
Perforce recoil; and now ignobly flee—
Yet flee not far; ere thus again the voice
Of Satan high; "How far shall madness go?
To what extremity folly proceed?
Do you intend bear down your prison walls,
Or bathe you in the flood, for what else is?
For know, from hence, nor I, nor these remove;
Our proper realm, our sure propriety;
Nor can we now, nor would we if we could;
Reprieve exhausted, or, not yet arrived."
Loud laughter rang a peal of hideous chime;
And on the host fierce glared the four, nor long
Irresolute;— their great hearts burned!—pride fanned
Their fury, and an instant thrilling hate
Prompted to harm: outflew their monstrous swords;
Outflew forthwith a myriad answering;
That hell wide blazed: soon havoc reigned: but who

Shall comprehend the war of spirits? who
The heights of rage to which the lost ascend?
Who shall describe the noise that speedily reigned?
To what shall be compared the spectacle?
Infernal ire, and archangelic strength,
Combined to ruin; and a roar, beyond
The savage tempest's, shook the madding scene:
Immense the tide that flowed from angel's veins:
Down the broad chest, Moloch soon thrice laid open;
Belial, shared all one shoulder; Beelzebub,
Disparted to the chine, and thrice impaled;
Satan, all scars; from which flowed rivers down
His front distained. But these, immortal being,
Fail not, neither from military wound,
Nor vulgar accident, and still combat,
Though in huge pain: nor less secure of life
The meaner sort; nor less in bravery,
Although in prowess less. But mortals, nor
Immortals, can perpetually war:
Although these fall, to rise again; and those
Their strength renew, although outpouring fast
From grim wide wounds,—such privilege spirits have,
Invulnerable unto mortal dint,
And scoffing at death's dart. Moreo'er, the sight
Of their compatriots maddens those unhurt,
And hastes the end, now nigh; for ready feels
Each warrior, and, at signal given, a crowd
Rush on: rude was the shock: as 'gainst high towers

The blast on sudden hurls the falling snows,
The quick assault was made; and soon the four,
Lately so terrible at large in rage,
Stand vanquishèd, with enemies enwrapped.
Great was the shout that followed, and far rang
The abyss, and hell's immense recess; whilst swords
Spread waving wild, and lit the scene: awhile,
Reigned fiery tumult, and wild ebullition—
When, as a hundred rockets shot at once,
From hundred points, upon a crowded plain,
Uprose a hundred voices, wide around,
Commanding their committal to the flames.
Joy sparkled in all eyes at the idea,
And on they urge them with revolting port;
Hilarious with cruel glee. As round
Their future victims cannibals disport,
So now around the culprit four, the host,
On moving to the sentiment of wrath,
Reckless, and drunk with fury: as bacchants
With wine inspired, or phrenzy, now they clap
Their hands, and now their swords clash hideous;
Now, with linked fingers, from the ground upsprings
A cohort to the air, and therein foots,
With wanton measure, o'er the moving crowd:
Some chaunt loud exultanas; some denounce
The tyrants left within; some deem hell half
Abolishèd; and some, in thought, have ta'en
Their permanence on earth: some rise, and bear

The tidings to the rear; some soar to note
What wrath is on the flood; some make grimace,
And some there are relent; whilst others fierce,
Tax these as traitorous, and oft the hurt
Display their gashes to sustain the rage.
Thus they proceed, and urge their prisoners:
Moloch, with gnashing teeth and eyes inflamed;
Belial, with tears, yet tears that inward rolled;
Beelzebub, in an apparent calm;
Satan, with face concealed.—And now the roof
Of the infernal den, and adamant walls,
In lurid light appearing, and the heat
Noisome, that fitful comes in frequent waves,
Stifling, sulphureous; and the trembling ground,
Tell they approach unto the fatal shore
Of that grim sea of fire and brimstone, which
Encircles all hell's vast interior:
Also, the arch-captive, having shaken off
His sudden horror, marks collectedly
The careless tumult, and his powers
Gathers silently within: he meekly seems
To travel, and as if from terror shrinks;
Even as the intending boa contracts its coil,
But to enlarge its spring. For he not dreams
To undergo the fiery award
Of his fell subjects, but, as towards some fort
Of disaffected town, are secretly,
Borne ammunition and the stores of war;

His crafty heart upbuilding, skulks along;
And from the tented ambush of his lids,
Round slily peers, until the slackened arms
Tell him of thoughts distracted; when, espied
His opportunity, at one distend,—
Yet sure as powder's from the pregned earth,—
He snaps like packthread their entwining arms;
And now like to a sheet of severed flame,
When conflagrations in the night obtain,
Scuds on the Stygian air. The host beheld
The sight, amazed; and uttered a loud cry
Of indignation, as if all were lost;
But soon beheld him wheeling o'er the flood,
His spear in couch, and with his locks erect,
Seeming a wearing ship, whose masts are gone
And forecastle in flames; as round he swept
With broadside huge and cloud of heeling wing;
Whence, launched with loud Ha ha's, and driving 'fore
Him a wild hurricane, he rushes back,
More terrible than thousand gilded knights,
Or the forked lightning, and relieved the thralls:
Another cry ensued, but none dared let;
And, followed by his mates, he crossed his realm,
And sought the parts especial for earth's damned,
Its most remote, and there loud cried; "Arise,
Arise, ye lost! ye lost, but now are found;
Depart your crags, and peaks, and horrid dells;
The inexorable at length is satisfied;

Redeemed ye are, again on trial put;
Remanded hence by a resistless will;
Fate cannot hold, nor hell, nor hell's, nor I;
Awake, arise, and rush to your reprieve."
His voice resounds, and many an echoing side
Gave back the phrase, "and rush to your reprieve;"
And straight o'er crag, peak, fell, and gentler knoll;
By gloomy banks, and drowsy cindrous heaps;
From listless lones, and gloomy twilit pits;
From thousand dark and solitary vales;
From heights forlorn, from depths unfathomable;
From desert tracks, and from enormous shade;
Sands, rocks, and gulfs, vaults, caverns, dens; and clefts
Wherein the owlet ghosts had fondly dreamed,
In thrilling thought to have moped till judgment day,
The apparition grew; whilst round he ranged,
And ranged his ministers, and still, with cries
Loud as a trump of doom, called up new hosts,
Who, all delirious with their new-found hope,
Abandoned all their horrible domains.

From the dark atmosphere in which the four
Make gleamy orbits, soon, well pleased he
Beholds the result, all earth's below; and thus
Enjoins: "Arm, arm yourselves, let every soul
Take arms, for on the opposite, mine own
In envy stand, arrayed to oppose your bliss."
He said, and the immense unto the ground
Bowed down, and seizing each a torment, whirled

It dimly round; then rushed o'er Tartarus.
As o'er a plain flits cloud-shade, these, o'er hell;
With dumb velocity and numbers infinite,
Young, old, male, female, all the wretched kind;
All generations that have missed of heaven;
A huge compacted continent of shade;
And as the north-blast takes the forest ends,
Came on their supposed foe. Up tumult sprang,
And dire alarums fleet, that spread along,
And passing through the wide infernal ports,
Sent far into the hollow of the deep.
The cry, "The shades, the shades!" fast swelled the din;
And presently in mighty volume grew
Beyond the thunders of the universe;
That hell astonished, quailed; yet filled with fire,
And thick Tartarean smoke, her swift closed gates;
That shook through all their adamantine bars,
With the recoil obstreperous of such haste;
Whilst doubtful on she looked at the turmoil,
Heaving enormous in huge lambent waves,
Each mountainous and vast as Chilian snows;
Or where, besides earth's white firm surface, seems
Like to the wrath-caught billows of old deep.
But vain the efforts of the bodiless!
For soon where they arrested, soon o'erpowered;
Soon made to acknowledge a superior force:
Like to the rush of ocean flood they came,
That, breaking down its banks, comes o'er a land

Wild roaring, but full soon is made as nought,
Sucked up and swallowed in the desert sands:
Their joy soon from them fled, and tenfold pains
Caught them, deceivèd: and yet hard they strove,
And with their rage amazed the fiends, their strong
Custodians astonishèd; on whom,
Thrice being from them driven, they thrice returned,
Like night returning to dislodge the dawn.
But all was vain, though aided by the four,
Who, like the riding demons of the storm,
Wide wasting flew: phrenzy indeed awhile
Sustained them, and the horror of relapse;
But compassèd by angels, pitted 'gainst
The exasperated giants of the skies,
What could they do? Despair at length o'ercomes
Them; and resigning strife, worse fate was nigh;
When from his throne GOD saw th' catastrophe.—
From the fixed bosom of eternal calm,
Unpierced by perturbation, undisturbed,
His boundless thought serene, that comprehends
In one unbroken, infinite idea,
Eternity, and without change of place
Bending o'er heaven's verge his sleepless eye,—
For it was night in heaven as well as hell,—
He all had viewed, and now unto his Son,
In simple equanimity, thus spake:—
"Mine only Son, and sharer of my throne:
Creator, and Upholder, and the Judge

At last of every world; sees' thou yon crew?
They to themselves being left a little while,
And grown intoxicate with futile hope,
Band themselves strong 'gainst fate: and he returned,
Whom late we chained upon the frosty waste;
Like to the meeting of two current seas,
Hell grows embroiled; and the inferior souls,
Who wait the sentence of thy righteous doom,
Have left their place, and suffer in the change:
But our behest shall be unchangeable,
To everlasting, like ourselves, endure;
Who feed with anger still hell's sable fires,
And still empower her ingrates them to bear
Unalterable; as we once have sworn,
Our edict shall irrevocable stand:
Therefore go down, and after our decree
And thine own will, be 't done." Straightway the Son,
Whose rising seemed a thousand summer noons,
And eyes the gathered brilliance of the stars,
Swept in his chariot the etherial sky:
Vengeance preceded him, behind him came
The obsequious Destiny: all nature quailed:
His left hand steered his car, and in his right
Ever he grasped the air; that in his fist
Conceiving thunder, thence, 't was hurled beneath:
This upon hell told sore, and quelled the fray: —
As, during some convulsion of the earth,
Her hostile creatures herd together, tame;

So now, upon the wide Tartarean plain,
Demons and shadows all promiscuous,
Trembling, a world of strewn: soon, hell he gained,
Who, trembling, would have fled, but he forbade;
And bidding her be still with sovereign voice,—
Who else, had fleeing sought a lower deep,—
Midst silence deeper than that lower deep,
Upon her standing, now thus awful spake:
"Sinners, depart;" and earth's prone host, from hell's
Divided, fled; then with a voice as much
More terrible, as those detainèd were
To those dismissed superior in crime;
"Hear, ye rebellious!" and the dreadful note
Enhanced their terrors by a hundred-fold;
"Since ye have chosen him your leader be,
Him shall ye follow; ye who to me disdained
Obedience, shall yield it to yon prone;
Your master he for ever, and your doom,—
Who light nor liberty once knew to prize,
And of our loving-kindness made so small,—
Here in this dungeon endless to abide,
Nor earth continually respiting as now,
Slaves of a slave, and bond-things of a bound."
As on the still and corpse-strewn battle field
Lie the unburied dead, now lay the host,
Speechless, transfixed; then one long wordless cry,
Swoln to big ocean's moan from multitude,
From 'midst them rose—soon overwhelmed; for now

Thunders burst o'er them, and with lightnings red,
Shook and illumined all the land of bale.
Unparalleled the noise, intense the pain!
Even the tempest now their cries out-grow.
As mountains upon mountains hurled, and each
Concussion louder than before, now raged
The horrid rivalry obstreperous,
And filled the deep. Oh who shall tell that sound,
Describe that sight! Or, grovelling, they wept,
Or stood, like to enormous Ajaxes,
And him defied, the first-born Son of God,
And all his lightnings, and his bolts, bade end
Them, but in vain; then, mad with fury, all,
Enstrengthenèd with phrenzy, round careered
In one tremendous whirling multitude,
With gestures horrible, and blasphemies;
Then down refell. Hell gazed with all her eyes,
Piercing the gloom: hell quailèd at the sight,
And strove them vomit forth upon the deep;
When, her stern walls of adamant not complying,
She, from her place from the beginning kept,
Shot like an ebon star across the gulf;
Till, fate recalling her terrifically,
She it resumed, and like enormous bell
Swung to and fro i' th' void. The void was filled
With thunders, and the lightning through the abyss
Rushed like a torrent down on Acheron;
That now, storm-wrapped she stood with lifted hair,

Lambent: all o'er her sighed; all o'er her groaned;
Her denizens grew faint, and fainter yet;
And universal Tophet half expired.
At length abatement came, the peals less loud,
Less frequent, and the fiery cataract
To tumble less impetuously began;—
When, with raised hands and silent agony,
Arisen innumerable, the wretched force,
Up gazing fixedly, besought reprieve:
But duller still the lifted thunder grew,
And duller still: high in the loft soon rolled,
Immoveable; or only to the ear
Advanced, long drawn through all the aisles of hell,
And to her 'waking fires bade horrible
Adieu, and now surceased. Describeless chill
Then seized upon their hearts, and down they dropped,
O'ercome with their despair; and raised the four
Their heads, and gazed around with grisly joy,
At their such triumph, and their rule secured.

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